

Chapter 1

The Verdict

The candles and torches floating around the solemn-looking room cast flickering shadows on every crevice of the stone walls and every facet of the occupants' grave faces.

There were a total of seven persons assembled in this grim enclosure, four of whom were sitting on one side of the room, two others who were standing on the opposing side, and a newly arrived person who was striding over to the standing figures.

Among those standing was a short man with a green bowler hat, who, despite the absurdity of his appearance, vainly attempted to take on an air of importance. Beside him stood the well-built figure of a middle-aged man who displayed nothing more than indifference. Striding over to the man in the bowler hat was a tall and redheaded young man whose expression portrayed a sense of professional eagerness. The young man quietly addressed his superior as if his concerns required a professional privacy that none of their companions should be inclined to hear. However, the other five members in the room heard the following exchange anyway.

"Mister Fudge, Dumbledore is requesting to be present at the verdict. The secretary just informed me that he and some of his vigilantes were stationed in the lobby" informed the redhead.

"In the lobby, huh? I assume that he is trying to get down here and that there are Aurors subduing them?" said the man in the bowling hat, now known to be Fudge, the British Minister of Magic at the time.

The face of Cornelius Fudge revealed an unappealing mix of nervous anxiety and childish excitement, as if he was both dreading and anticipating the events to follow.

"I don't believe he knows yet where these proceedings are being held. When I was there, the secretary hadn't informed him yet that we moved the congress down to the basement."

“Good. Thank you, Fairweather. Let’s see to it that we make this event last no longer than necessary, as to avoid the intrusion of any unwanted visitors.”

Fairweather, better known as the young Percival Weasely, let escape a small self-accomplished grin at his role model’s praise. Then, in a show of respect, he bowed his head and stood back in the corner to watch the events unfold.

With a confirming nod from Fudge, the man beside him stood forward and addressed the four members sitting before him.

“Harry James Potter is charged on conspiracy against the British Ministry of Magic. He also has the additional charges of the following. The destruction of private property, the destruction of public property, arousal of social unrest, affiliation with a terrorist organization deemed illegal by the Ministry of Magic, and four counts of first-degree murder.”

This man, in his professional garments that bore the same coldness as his demeanor, took what would be assumed to be a dramatic pause if not for the unlikeliness that his character would allow such an action, and perused his eyes over his audience. With the same disconnectedness with which he began his oration, he continued.

“On July 17, 1996, the Ministry of Magic hereby finds the accused person guilty on all accounts.” The effects of this statement on the moods of the room’s occupants varied between each person. Fudge’s already rosy cheeks brightened in his poorly-suppressed cheeriness; Percy Weasely similarly looked delighted, even if only for his employer’s satisfaction rather than for his own agreement with the verdict. The messenger of these charges, a certain Mister Robert Avery, revealed no emotion at all.

Among those seated was the respectable Amelia Bones whose eyes dulled with a muted apprehension.

She, out of all the partisans in the company, was the most disappointed. Ms. Bones did not believe the guiltiness of the accused but was in no more power to change the verdict than the accused

himself was. In fact something about this was creating a feeling of immense dread within her very soul, as if it was warning her to not allow this to happen.

To her right sat two qualified Aurors hired to apprehend the criminal if he attempted to resist arrest. Although both showed almost as little emotion as the Mister Avery had shown, neither men could help but let escape a bit of their glee. Understandably, both men could not help but take pride in their direct involvement in what was sure to become one of the most famous trials in history.

Lastly, there was the reaction of Harry Potter himself. The already strained shoulders of this not even sixteen-year-old boy slumped as if a massive weight had been fastened to his back. Although his composure was nothing note-worthy to begin with, his whole stature tilted forward slightly and his shackled hands trembled in apprehension. Sweat glued his unruly black bangs onto his marred forehead and a tormented emotion tugged downward the corners of his tight-pressed lipped. Perhaps the most notable reaction of all in this young man was revealed in his eyes: the once lively green orbs that had glittered unrestrained a few mere weeks before darkened to a deep-sea-green as if an indescribable agony was prodding at the soul behind the irises. The shadows skittering across his cheeks and brow fulfilled his image of a despaired young soul.

Facing the Auror guards, Fudge commanded, "Escort him to the apparation room immediately. Avoid everyone until he is safely confined." Turning to Percy again, Fudge said, "Retrieve the dementors. They should be waiting in the corridors."

Although Harry had anticipated the verdict with a consuming pessimism, he was still taken by unpleasant surprise upon the entrance of these dementors. The flames lighting the room almost sizzled dead as darkness swallowed up the stony enclosure. An amazing sorrow flooded the room and seized Harry Potter in his very heart. His eyes further dulled and an onslaught of negative memories attacked the forefront of his mind. In fact, he was so consumed by his internal struggles that he paid no heed to the incessant, and somewhat painful, tugging on his shackles.

Images appeared...

Memories were being triggered.

His mother pleading, high-pitched laughter, Cedric Diggory's lifeless face, Sirius Black falling through the veil, and Peter Pettigrew, knife in hand were old and nothing new to him in his nightmares.

The ones that came next though...those hurt the most...

Hermione Granger's shocked face, Ronald Weasley's cruel insults. Harry betrayed them. Harry killed the barkeeper Tom. Harry became a death eater. Harry broke Dumbledore's blind faith. Harry aimed the killing curse at a schoolmate. Harry laughed merciless above the dead bodies of the Leaky Cauldron's occupants. Harry watched the street ignite in flames.

Harry did none of these things. Yet these were the words of everyone he knew and loved that were shouted at him for days after his so called arrest.

But everyone thought he did. Even Dumbledore was tentative to doubt the accusations. Everyone hated him. Sirius would have been the only one to understand... to sympathize. Sirius was dead.

Because of Harry...

Now even Harry doubted his own innocence.

Amelia Bones sadly watched the nearly lifeless form of Harry Potter being escorted out the doors, to Azkaban, while he himself was heedless to it all.

The dread in her soul only increasing the woman begins to wonder.

Was saying nothing...right?

Chapter 2

The Plea

It had been two months since the biggest traitor to the light side, Harry Potter, had been imprisoned in the dreaded Prison of Azkaban. All of Harry's former friends now believed him to be a vicious follower of the feared Dark Lord, even those like Hermione Granger who were inclined with all of their hearts to disbelieve that the innocent boy they once knew could commit any such atrocities.

However, even to Ronald Weasley and Hermione, the evidence was undeniable. Harry had been seen casting the Dark Mark into the sky. He had been seen attacking the Leaky Cauldron. He had been seen casting numerous Unforgivable curses.

Polyjuice and disillusionment spells could easily replicate Harry's identity upon another felon, Harry's friends would argue. It must have been a Death Eater in disguise slandering the name of the boy-who-lived. Nevertheless, the person apprehended after those horrible events did not change face with the numerous counter spells cast upon him. That same boy was locked up in one of the many holding cells in the Ministry of Magic. Meanwhile, Harry Potter was absent from the Dursley household.

The Harry Potter look-alike was then tried with the truth potion before a small, well-selected jury. The entire Wizengamot, except for Albus Dumbledore who was barred from attending the trial due to evident favoring of the subject, witnessed the boy's confession to all of the crimes, betrayal to the Wizarding world, and support of Voldemort. The boy revealed his name to indeed be Harry Potter. Under Veritaserum, the boy could not have lied. Harry Potter was indeed guilty.

But was he? Remus Lupin, the last surviving truehearted Marauder, could not help questioning the results of the trial as he sat in Dumbledore's office. Before the frail werewolf sat the old and downhearted Albus Dumbledore himself, both men were now mirroring one another more than ever in age...

"He's innocent Albus, I swear it!" Remus weakly protested. Albus just shook his head gravely.

"Remus, as much as I would love to agree with you, even I cannot refute the evidence. There were witnesses. He testified under the truth potion. He is a follower of Voldemort."

"But Albus! Harry would never do any of those things! He would not have killed those third years. He wouldn't have killed Tom either, especially when Tom had let him stay there in the past! Harry isn't evil!"

"I didn't think so either." replied Dumbledore quietly.

Frustrated, Remus continued his defense. "It's not in his character to kill! He was upset even at the prospect of killing Voldemort! He's not a murderer... and he would certainly never join the Dark Lord, especially after he killed his parents and landed him with the Dursleys! He hated the Dursleys!"

"I fear that his betrayal may have been entirely my fault, Remus." Dumbledore confessed hopelessly. "I fear that it may have been his presence with his Aunt's family that had nurtured the hatred within him... a hatred he had managed to hide until this point." The old man said dejectedly.

"Something broke his restraint on those negative inclinations recently... maybe something that surfaced in my office a few months ago." Dumbledore looked sadly at the array of broken silver instruments towards which he was too partial to remove from his office. "...maybe it was even the death of Sirius that triggered it..."

"NO!" Remus exclaimed. The man looked possessed at that very moment, as if Dumbledore himself had struck him. "No! He would never betray Sirius like that! Harry's stronger than that! Do NOT insult the memory of Sirius! Don't you see what's happening! You just linked Harry to Sirius... and Sirius had been sent to Azkaban wrongly and now Harry too! They were ... are both innocent!"

Dumbledore looked at the man before him with a look of pity. "You can see now, can't you, why I cannot let you visit him? You are unstable Remus... terribly so. I fear it will upset you permanently if you were to see Harry in the cells. It may even set you over the edge like Harry had been."

With several heavy breaths and his eyes firmly shut, Remus regained his composure. "Please. Please, Albus. I have nothing else to live for... I need Harry. I need." He took a deep breath and shut his eyes once more. "I need to see him. Even if you are right ... I need to see him one last time... for closure. Please!"

"Remus! I cannot allow it! You must understand... even if you were to visit him, if I understand correctly from my reports, he would not respond. He's ... unresponsive. He's not the same boy we once knew. It would tear your heart, Remus."

Remus continued desperately, "No. I must see him. He'll listen... he'll... even if he doesn't. No. I must see him. It hurts me more... to know... he knows... thinks I don't care! He'll think I don't care if I don't visit him! Like I avoided Sirius when he was imprisoned... I don't see why he remained my friend all that time... I left him there to rot! Not again! Not again! Put me at ease, Albus... that is my last request. Let me see the boy! One visit! One hour! Please! I beg of you!" When Dumbledore looked ready to deny the request again, Remus resorted to blackmail. "If I cannot see Harry, what motivation will I have to serve the Order? I could live no longer, never mind assist the Order!"

Dumbledore relinquished a resigned sigh before looking up to meet the troubled man's amber eyes once more. "So be it..."

He shut his dulled blue eyes tightly and massaged the bridge of his crooked nose with his thin, crooked fingers before continuing. "If this is what will put you at ease, although I tend to disagree. But alas, what choice do I have? We need your services Remus... but I want you to be content. I'll put my word in for a visit... escorted, of course..."

"No. Alone. I need to see him privately."

Dumbledore looked unconvinced, but agreed nevertheless. "...alone. I'll put my word in for a visit, but I make no promises. If it puts your heart at ease to believe he knows you care for him still... then why should I prevent it? I've warned you though, Remus... I've warned you."

"Thank you."

Chapter Three

Visit

Three people, two of which were Aurors, navigated through the twisting and ill-lit corridors that were flanked with jail cells on either side. Finally, they all stopped before an obscure cell in the deepest, most well protected portion of Azkaban. One of the guards tapped the bars a few times and yelled something illegible inside. No response. They unlocked the doors and motioned for the third man to enter the cell. As soon as this man, with graying brown hair and shallow cheeks as if anxiety had been eating him from the inside, stepped completely inside, the cell door shut noisily behind him.

In one of the far corners of the cell sat a shadow-wrought figure. An uneaten serving of disgusting looking food lay near his feet and the his legs were covered with a shabby grey blanket that vainly attempted to save him from the oppressing coolness of the enclosure.

Remus looked into the sunken face of the boy before him. Even through the darkness he could make out the sickly pale shade of the boy's skin and the unruly hair that lay flat against the child's forehead. Most disconcerting of all was the dullness by which the eyes were taken. If Remus had not known the child before, he would have doubted that this person was ever the famed, courageous, lively boy-who-lived... for this boy looked anything but alive.

"Hello Harry" Remus ventured to say. No response. "It's Remus... Moony... I'm here to visit you." No response. No movement. The boy sat there like a corpse. A passing dementor in the corridor sent a shiver down Remus' spine.

"Harry, I know you aren't well but please respond!" Nothing. "Harry! I think you're innocent. I know it."

Still nothing is heard or seen...

"You would never have hurt anyone. I know it. I know you." The corpse lay propped up against the wall. "Harry please respond! That's all I ask! Move! Breathe! You must listen to me!"

Although there was no outward sign that Harry heard a word of what Remus said, Harry had indeed processed the words, even if only in disconnected tangents. The boy's mind was broken by the nearly-constant presence of the dementors and his thoughts were now ground into disconnected ideas, most of which revolved around the horrors of his life. However, the dementors were not near his cell and he could listen to what Remus was saying.

Harry knew Remus was there. He knew Remus was different. Hermione hated him. Ron hated him. Dumbledore hated him. Remus didn't. This brought some semblance of happiness to Harry's mind, however muted it was.

Giving the youth some measure of knowing that somewhere out there...

Someone still cared.

Grabbing Harry's shoulders and forcing the boy to look face to face with him, Remus began speaking again in a low whisper. "Listen. I know you are. You always are... you're observant. Please! Listen!" With a bit of shaking, Harry still failed to show physical response and his eyes remained as distant as before.

Remus would try to get his message across... but he could only hope that Harry comprehended what he was saying. "Remember the lessons, Harry. Remember Sirius. He was here, too... locked up. I know you can't resist the dementors like Padfoot did... Padfoot... the grim... a dog... you aren't a dog.... But you're something, remember? It will help! Remember what Sirius did! Do what Sirius did! Change! Save yourself!"

Harry's head tilted backwards a little because the support of the wall was removed. Remus grabbed it and brought it to his own face. "Animagus! You can be an Animagus Harry! The dementors... you don't like them, but the Animagus lessons will help you! Practice... when I leave, you must try to complete the transformation! You can... escape! Like Sirius... you must escape! You're innocent! You're not supposed to be here... transform!"

By this point the hysterical Remus was desperate to get some acknowledgement out of Harry. He shook the boy helplessly and tears began to roll down his cheeks. "Please, Harry!" he muttered over and over again. However, the boy was as unresponsive as before, as he had been since being locked up in that cell, and made no sign that he heard a word of Remus. The guards then came and escorted Remus out of the cell and out of the prison.

When Remus returned to Hogwarts, he did not speak a word of the visit to Dumbledore. Consequentially, Dumbledore correctly assumed that the visit was not as satisfying as Remus convinced himself it would be. In the next few months no one visited Harry but Remus held onto his hope that Harry would be discovered innocent and be freed from his undeserved misery.

Nobody but Harry and Remus even suspected Remus's intentions that day. Dumbledore and the rest of the Order of the Phoenix assumed the pitiful man was simply trying to spark some response in the boy. They believed Remus had simply needed to see the child. Nobody knew that Remus was trying to get Harry to escape the prison.

However, no one, not even Remus nor Harry, knew how important that meeting really was. No one at the time knew that it would come to save Harry's life.

Harry had absorbed the information Remus told him. He understood that Remus wanted him to attempt the Animagus transformation. He understood that Remus wanted him to escape. However, his mind, at the time, was too fuddled to process a means to utilize this information. It would not be until another 11 months that Harry would use this information and not a moment too soon either.

After all legends say that history can and does repeat itself...

Chapter Four

The Death

On July 31, 1997, Harry Potter was escorted out of his cell and side-apparated out of Azkaban to the holding facilities in the Ministry of Magic. During the several hours when he was being held in these rooms, Fudge and other Ministry officials were discussing the fate of the boy-who-lived.

As usual, the fickle Wizarding populace had gullibly turned their backs on the boy-who-lived as soon as they were told that he was a Death Eater. The capture and imprisonment of the boy did well for Fudge's approval rating but long-established ministry laws prevented Fudge from acting any further by executing an under-age wizard. However, now that the boy was 17 and legally an adult, he was eligible to be executed, as Fudge had originally wanted. It was soon decided that the boy would be Kissed and then his body would be cremated as soon as possible.

By now, several hours of freedom from the dementor's presence lifted some of the confusion from Harry's mind. By no means was the mental damage reversed but his fragmented thoughts were making more sense and for the first time in several months he recalled Remus's visit. He remembered Remus's wish for him to pursue his Animagus form and a deep urge within in, probably due to his sole trust in the only one who trusted him, beckoned him to please the man and accomplish the feat.

However, an obstacle existed between Harry and the acquisition of his Animagus form. Although he, Hermione, and Ronald had been receiving lessons from Remus and Sirius during their fifth year of Hogwarts so that they would have some value to the Order of the Phoenix and could be inducted, Harry was never successful. Both Ronald and Hermione had discovered their Animagus forms and made progress in the complete transformation. Hermione had the form of a bobcat and Ron had the form of a red fox.

Harry had not even succeeded in discovering his form. The potion and psychological training he endured proved fruitless as his form

eluded his mind. For awhile, they all believed that maybe the boy did not have one, much to the disappointment of Harry himself.

However, the Animagus test potion turned blue, thus indicating that he was capable of a transformation. Therefore, while Hermione and Ron pursued the transformation with some insight towards their final form, Harry went forth blindly. The next steps involved a series of potions and mental and magical training. Due to the presence of the experienced Remus and Sirius, the process was greatly accelerated and all three students quickly went through the necessary requirements.

One of the final steps was the mental transformation. Many scholars and scientists had theorized that if a person was to physically transform before they mentally transformed, they were likely to go insane and stay in their animal form forever because the human mind would not function properly within an animal body. Other more pessimistic scientists foresaw an even worse result and believed that the person would be stuck in a middle stage between human and animal and would die due to the inefficiency of such a hybrid.

Surprisingly, Harry had the easiest time with this step.

While Hermione and Ron struggled to get into the enlightened mindset of their respective animal forms, Harry could easily shift into the mindset of his still undiscovered form and retain his human insights all the same. However, the benevolent, objective, and optimistic mood in which Harry found himself gave him no indication to the identity of his inner animal. All the same, this was his only Animagus strength that Hermione and Ron lacked.

Unfortunately, Harry's transformation would go no further. Every time he attempted to complete the physical transformation, a searing pain would consume his limbs and inhibit him from continuing his efforts.

It was memories of these lessons that reached Harry during the last moments of his confinement in the holding cells. When guards made him stand up upon his weak and shaking legs, the urge came to him to again try the transformation. With a newfound determination instilled by the desperate Remus several months prior, his

fragmented mind cleared and molded into the animal mindset once more. Even though months had passed since he last tried to transform, it was just as easy as the last time.

With an animal mind that retained its human insights, Harry suddenly found everything to be clearer than it had been in months. He could now think in objective, complete thoughts rather than the fuddled, confused tangents that he was used to thinking. Furthermore, his despaired mood now was countered by a foreign optimism that he couldn't explain. Harry suddenly comprehended what was about to happen and illogically resolved that the only solution would be to complete his animagus transformation. There was no logical or rational support for this conclusion, but an animalistic sense of reasoning supported it anyway.

The Aurors half led, half dragged Harry through the corridors with no idea that the boy, who otherwise showed no difference in his physical appearance, was somehow different than a few moments before. For the first time ever, Harry found himself before a dementor with no change in his mental demeanor.

For the first time ever, Harry was not affected.

Still, when the dementor's skeletal hands grabbed hold of him, he struggled to avoid the monster, still recognizing the danger this creature presented. Harry was still as weakened as before and his struggles were in vain as the creature pulled his face up to its own and lowered his own hood. The boy witnessed the rarely seen grotesque face of a dementor for the second time in his life. The only difference this time was that the demonic lips actually met his own.

It was an odd feeling. It felt as if an evil foreign presence was foraging through his veins attempted to grab hold of a soul it could not grasp. It appeared to Harry that the animalism of his mind somehow shielded him from the dementor's attack, much like Sirius had been emotionally unaffected by dementors while imprisoned for 12 years.

After a few moments in which the creature vainly tried to acquire a soul behind a fortified mind, their lips parted and Harry crumpled to the floor with no support from either the guards or the dementor.

Something told Harry to not expend any energy. This and the fact he had little energy and strength to spend anyway made Harry appear the perfect model of a soulless person and this image satisfied the guards who then levitated the body towards the cremation room.

Harry of course did not notice the presence that entered the room at the last moment. Harry did not see the remorse that molded Dumbledore's features as he entered the room and discovered he had been too late to save the child from a soulless state. Harry did not notice and would not have thought to remedy these incorrect notions by moving even if he had noticed.

The guards dragged the boy to a giant machine, which appeared to take up the entire room. Of course, this machine wasn't like any muggle machine that ran on gears but rather a magically-powered device used to incinerate lifeless or soulless bodies.

When Harry was levitated onto a giant slab of stone and pushed into the enclosed cavity of the device, realization struck him. He was going to be cremated! With little strength, the child flailed around in vain until the heat began. At first it was a tolerable warm but then a fire erupted that began to burn his flesh. In a moment of panic, he attempted the physical Animagus transformation.

As usual, a searing pain erupted in his limbs and torso and the pain consumed his animalistic mind. However, unlike the last times, the pain of not pursuing this transformation was worse, and so he continued anyway. Soon, the fire coursing through his veins became unbearable and with one last attempt he pushed all of his magical effort into the transformation.

At that moment, the fire of the machine flared and Harry Potter was incinerated into a pile of ashes.

That same moment, Amelia Bones as well as several others who had been at that farce of a trial felt a fatal sense of fatality hit them like a brick. Most shook it off...

But for those like Amelia...

Fate has a way of giving a warning to what is to come if this action continues...

And Fate does not like to be ignored.

Chapter Five

Too Late

Albus Dumbledore had been sitting in his office and pleasantly sucking on a lemon drop in a vain attempt to forget the memories this early morning would bring.

You see, today was July 31st and it just so happened to be a certain raven-haired boy's seventeenth birthday. However, the said boy happened to be a heartless murderer and was currently residing in Azkaban. Nevertheless, despite the flaws of young Harry Potter, Dumbledore could not help but feel tragically partial towards the boy.

Especially since an overwhelming feeling of dread had been in his soul since everything that had happened began.

Dumbledore was plucked from his sad reverie when the pendant upon his chest grew warm, thus indicating a presence at the foot of the stairs leading to his office. The old man spanned out his senses a little to identify the aura of the guest and discovered Severus Snape. Then again, who else would be climbing up his staircase at 2 AM in the morning, coincidentally after a death eater meeting?

"Come in, Severus."

The hooked-nosed man with greasy black hair grumpily strode into the man's office with a slight limp, as if he had been victim to the sadistic murmur of "crucio" earlier in the night. Annoyed with the man's mysterious means of identifying visitors, Snape hastily, and a tad bit harshly, refused the offered lemon drop.

Truth be told, Dumbledore was a bit happy about this new arrival, despite the ever-solemn circumstances that always surrounded Severus Snape. However, what Dumbledore did not know was that this very exchange would be about the one thing both men wanted to avoid thinking about: Harry Potter.

Snape slowly relayed the night's events to Dumbledore who listened intently. However, at the end of the oration, Snape hesitated a bit.

“Is that all, Severus?” Dumbledore asked knowingly.

With a glare, Snape continued reluctantly. “Tonight the Dark Lord introduced a death eater.”

“And...?”

Turning his cold eyes downward, Snape continued evermore unwillingly. “Apparently it was not a new member.” Snape appeared to be ready to stop, but with a prodding glance from Dumbledore’s twinkling blue eyes, continued again, even more grudgingly.

“Apparently it was a member who’s been around for awhile.” He paused as he tried to find the right words. “Over a year in fact.”

Another pause occurred and Dumbledore’s sinking feeling threatened to overwhelm him as memories of a poor boy that needed him most hit him. “He was a potion’s master, like me and one with the capability... the capability to create a Veritaserum replica with imperious properties.”

“Excuse me?” Dumbledore was a very intelligent man, and certainly understood the horrible implications of this statement, but he also noted that Snape was alluding to something that he himself had not yet deduced or as Snape would say himself later on in life.

Was not willing to deduce...

“A fake truth potion, sir. One that can make the drinker spew whatever the potion-creator wants to-”

“I understood that!” Dumbledore interjected.

“There are many things a man can do with one, sir.” Snape said with a cold glance and a bit of hesitation. “Additionally, the Dark Lord also has spies in the ministry. He could easily remove and replace people in custody. He could even go as far as to exchange the ministry’s potion stocks...”

And then a cold, hard revelation struck Dumbledore squarely in the chest. It struck so hard in fact that his breath caught in his throat for a second before he could force out a horror-filled exclamation.

“Harry Potter! Dear Merlin, no!” Snape seemed to cringe at the name, as if it was a vile curse that even a Death Eater should shudder upon hearing. Through Dumbledore’s disbelieving mutters of “no,” Snape continued.

“Apparently...” Snape drawled out, “the initial speculations were correct. One death eater or another did indeed take the facade of Harry Potter – I’m sure many will claim the honor of such – and you can imagine what he or she did under this disguise. When apprehended and taken into custody, one ministry-associated Death Eater or another – possible Avery – replaced the Potter-look-alike with the brat. Voldemort proudly relayed the whole night’s affair at tonight’s meeting, describing at full length how he broke through the blood wards exactly a year ago– which his revival of 1994 enabled him to do – and took Potter’s wand while the brat’s family were all asleep.”

Snape continued the story, looking more pleased at the aspect of Harry’s suffering than at the aspect of revealing Harry’s innocence, while Dumbledore grew paler with every word that attested to his own mistakes... the mistakes that sent an innocent child (his own Golden Boy at that!) to the most feared place in Wizarding Britain.

At one point or another, Dumbledore abruptly stood up so quickly that it made Snape falter. With newfound determination, Dumbledore started shooting out orders at Snape.

“I need you to wake Minerva and the two of you shall organize an Order meaning of only the inner circle – make sure to call Remus first, tell him what you told me, but make sure he is situated in a safe place first so he won’t hurt himself (“or ME!” Snape interjected) – my office will do...” Dumbledore said, glancing down at the broken objects still arranged on his desk.

“Tell him that I shall arrive back around seven if everything goes to plan. Also, inform Minerva first of the events about which this meeting

will be discussed. Tell no one else, besides Minerva and Remus, what you told me.” With that, Dumbledore strode out of his office and left a miserable Severus Snape in his wake.

It was already quarter past four in the morning when Dumbledore found himself in Azkaban accompanied by Mad-Eye Moody. By four thirty, the two were done arguing with the dark attendants who ran the prison and were striding through the corridors, heedless to the Aurors’ shouts of “stop!” and “go no further!” that met their backs. At twenty of five they finally found the cell of Harry Potter.

And it was empty.

“Where is he!” Dumbledore shouted. As one can imagine, an angry shout from this powerful wizard is indeed a scary thing to witness.

The prison attendant broke through the circle of Aurors that surrounded the duo standing before Harry Potter’s cell. With several gasps for breath, the exhausted man managed to get out, “I was trying to tell you earlier! You CAN’T see Harry Potter! He’s been relocated!”

“WHERE!”

The attendant momentarily froze at the demand, before rushing out, “the ministry!” With that, Dumbledore and Moody rushed out of the prison as fast as they had entered.

Fudge, like any other person, had his momentary intelligent moments. July 31, 1997 witnessed one of his few.

The Minister of Magic had planned to execute Harry Potter as soon as possible, especially at the urge of several of his close associates (like Avery for instance) and this opportunity revealed itself legally upon Harry’s seventeenth birthday. Therefore, Fudge had already relocated Harry to a rarely-used, well-hidden holding cell in the basement of the ministry building by three that morning. When his secretary informed him that Albus and a retired Auror were demanding Harry Potter approximately around 5 in the morning,

Fudge had already set the execution time to six. Not even Dumbledore would be able to fudge Fudge's plans.

A few minutes short of six found Moody and Dumbledore rushing through the ministry's basement corridors. After an hour of powerful persistence, the duo had finally discovered where the boy-who-lived was being held. No later had they set off on their quest. The door of the holding cell noisily crashed open upon Dumbledore's arrival.

And it revealed an empty room.

That could only mean one thing...

...and after all, why else would the ministry have removed Harry Potter from Azkaban except to enforce the ultimate punishment: a dementor's kiss.

The door of the Kiss Room was finally in sight. However, when a freezing chill met Dumbledore's frail frame, his pace quickened into a full-out sprint.

Dumbledore ran into the room just in time to see Harry Potter fall helplessly at the foot of the dementor. It was then, and only then, that Dumbledore realized why Voldemort had chosen this morning to boast of the framing of Harry Potter: because he wanted Dumbledore to feel the pain of being too late.

Dumbledore was an old man who had lived well over seven scores of years. He had, by then, witnessed the state of dementor victims and most certainly understood the well-known fact that there existed no cure for this state of soullessness. And Harry Potter was now soulless.

As Harry was being dragged out of the room to a destination unknown to Dumbledore, ministry officials swarmed in the room to apprehend the intrusive old man. Of course, no charges were made against the Chief Wizengamot, but what would it have really mattered to Dumbledore? He had just witnessed the irreversible soul-removal of an innocent child. The only hope for the wizarding world as well!

Dumbledore lifelessly scaled the staircase leading up to his office. He knew the Order was impatiently waiting for him at headquarters, but he didn't care. The only thing he cared about was confirmation. In the recesses of Dumbledore's aged heart dwelled a lingering hope that maybe Harry's state of soullessness could indeed be cured. If only he could see the exact details on the monitoring parchment...

Dumbledore slowly opened the door to find Remus pacing his office nervously. Upon seeing Dumbledore, Remus's amber eyes widened into hysteria and the man started anxiously lobbing questions at the old man.

"Where is he? Did you get him? He's at the order, isn't he? Merlin, tell me! You couldn't have possibly brought him to 12 Grimmauld Place, not with all the memories! I was going to go there but I thought you might come here first... Albus! Where in Merlin's name is he?"

A lifeless glance from Dumbledore shushed the desperate werewolf. He strode over to his desk and pulled open one of the many drawers in the magical furniture. He withdrew a piece of parchment and laid it on the desk.

It was blank.

This piece of parchment, which was once covered in green-inked scribbles of the state of Harry's well-being and general location, was now wordless. There was only one circumstance that cleared a monitoring parchment: death.

Dumbledore had been prepared for the emerald scribbling of "soulless" and "unresponsive." He had not been prepared to find the parchment blank. He had neither expected nor been prepared for the absolute lifelessness of Harry Potter...

Wizardkind's last hope...

With a bout of frustrated energy, Dumbledore's fire blazed with flames that then swallowed the piece of useless, banished parchment. The old man then sat down into his chair, elbows on his desk and dull, spark-less eyes hidden beneath crippled fingers, and, with not

another word, he cried. Dumbledore sat miserably at his desk and cried in front of Remus Lupin.

Remus stared in shock at the old wizard for several moments. The old man, who until this point appeared infallible, was reduced to tears at his own failings. Remus took in what he knew of the parchment and what he knew of Dumbledore's plan, and then he felt the dangerous revelation gnawing at his heart.

Breath eluded Remus and he began choking on his sobs. Harry Potter couldn't be dead! The boy he used to coddle as an infant... the child he taught in extra defense sessions... the teenager he saw as a son. That boy could not be dead... for that boy was the only one that kept him going. Remus's knees buckled beneath him and he crumpled to the floor, looking as miserable as Dumbledore.

These men, whose eyes were too teared with the failures and miseries of their lives, failed to notice the burning scraps ignite once more in emerald ink writing before completely burning into ashes at the basin of the headmaster's fireplace.

Failed to notice that not all hope was lost...

Chapter Six

Memories

The return of consciousness is much like that unspecified moment during which someone falls asleep and begins dreaming.

You can neither remember nor pinpoint the exact time of the occurrence, but you know it surely happened. Likewise, Harry would not be able to remember the exact instance during which he awoke, whether it was at the onset of a flood of memories or at the moment during which he became aware of his surroundings. Nevertheless, in a series of indistinguishable and indefinite moments, several things occurred.

Firstly, all of his memories rushed into his mind as an instantaneous synopsis of his entire life. Memories of the recent events, like his imprisonment in Azkaban and containment in the ministry, expectantly came.

Memories of earlier times, both pleasant and miserable, came next. Harry remembered living at the Dursleys' in a cupboard, meeting Hagrid for the first time, attending Hogwarts classes, laughing with his close-knit friends, flying on a broom during Quidditch games, and engaging in many dangerous escapades.

However, the memories did not stop there. Memories of his earliest childhood, in the company of Lily and James Potter, also reentered his mind despite being previously impossible to recall.

After this understandable return of memories, something less expected came: another flood. However, the recollections that rushed into Harry's mind this time were not his own. Memories that had been hidden in a highly protected yet perpetually darkened corner of his being, formerly inaccessible to Harry's consciousness, were now being reordered and stored in his mind.

The miserable excuse for a fractioned soul that contained them had been left unprotected by Harry's Animagus abilities and actually died in the crematory. However, although the foreign soul had been

destroyed, its alien memories and gifts were now bestowed to Harry for his own use.

This referral of memories was as quick as the first flood. In merely an instant, hundreds of scenes from a life sadder than Harry's own, yet in many ways similar, flashed before the eyes of his consciousness and found storage in the recesses of his mind. With these recollections came a new revelation, one that would impact the entire Wizarding World in several years to come.

Lastly, with all of these newfound memories, both his own and foreign, now settled in his head, Harry's eyes slowly began to open to reveal the sight of grey obscurity.

Chapter Seven

Urn

Upon awakening, Harry opened his eyes and beheld the sight of darkness. Surprised by the grey, he tried to move, or rather, squirm free. It was at this moment that he noticed he could not breathe. No, it wasn't that he couldn't breathe, but rather that the powdery grey substance would not let him. Now, both choking and disoriented, Harry flailed helplessly until his small, fowl head poked through the surface of the ashes.

His erratic breath slowed down and he slowly came to observe his surroundings. The first thing he noticed was that he was in some dark little enclosing that he did not recognize. Secondly, he noticed that it was indeed ashes in which he was imbedded. With this new information, Harry began trying to make out what in Merlin's name happened.

He began by asking himself the basics.

What did he last remember?

Being in prison?

No! He was in a ministry holding cell, he remembered. Okay then, in that case, what happened next? He remembered Remus telling him to complete his Animagus transformation... "That's it!" he thought suddenly. He had been trying to complete his Animagus transformation, and he had mentally transformed when... when... he was kissed!

With frightening alarm, Harry realized he should have been dead.

"I was kissed!" he kept repeating in his head over and over. For some reason though, he wasn't dead. "Why not?" he asked himself. It was then that he realized what had happened. The mental Animagus transformation had protected him from the dementor's kiss.

But then again, it made sense.

Dementors only affected humans, not animals. That's why Sirius had been able to escape... and that's why Harry, who had completed half his transformation (albeit the unobservable part), managed to survive the dementor's kiss. He also bitterly noted that surviving the dementor's kiss was yet another unprecedented and supposedly impossible feat that would be added to the list of accomplishments of "the-boy-who-lived."

"Okay, so I survived the dementor's kiss" Harry thought. Then he... then he... was put into a crematory. And yet here he was, apparently alive. "How in Merlin's name did I survive that?" he asked himself. The answer came to him not a moment later: he had completed the Animagus transformation. Which would mean...

He was in that form right now!

Instinctively, he tried to look down at himself but failed to discern anything with all of the ashes and darkness. However, he now noticed how different his appendages felt and the moment of senselessness left him. He had wings. He was a bird. Not just any bird, but a phoenix.

"I thought magic Animagus transformations were impossible?" Harry thought to himself. After all it had been instilled in him thanks to those lessons from Sirius and Remus.

Harry sat still in thoughtless silence for a second, letting the discovery wash over him. "I did it!" he then thought happily. "I'm an Animagus! And a phoenix of all things!" Suddenly, surviving a crematory made sense... especially when he had undergone his Burning Day in this said crematory.

In that moment of contentment, he thought of how proud Sirius would be. He thought of how proud Remus would be. Then an inextinguishable sorrow overtook him as he remembered that all of his old acquaintances still believed him to be some merciless killer. The memory of sitting in the courtroom, admitting under Veritaserum to all of those crimes he did not even commit, came back to haunt him.

Harry's despaired reverie was broken as the whole room began to shake. It felt as if the room was moving haphazardly in one direction so that he had to struggle with his newfound wings in order to avoid being swallowed by the waves of ash crashing against the walls of this odd enclosing. After a few minutes, Harry could no longer endure it and resolved to escape the confinement once and for all.

Harry knew enough about Fawkes to know that phoenixes could essentially teleport in a burst of flames from one place to another. Of course, Harry had absolutely no idea how to do this and after several minutes of vain effort he let out a frustrated trill. It seemed whatever force had been in charge of disrupting the room was somehow affected by the phoenix's cry and Harry soon found himself propelled into the ceiling of the room, drenched in ash. As abruptly as he found himself on the ceiling, Harry found himself laying on one of the side walls as if the entire room itself was rotating. Before the room could even steady, Harry found himself wishing he was anywhere else... and a little park outside of Surrey was the first image that came to mind.

The ministry official carrying the urn full of Harry Potter's ashes jumped when he heard the muted chirp reverberating from the pot. Consequentially, he lost his grip on the container and nearly let it shatter on the ground. Luckily for him, good reflexes saved the pot before it made contact with the stone floor and he gripped the urn tightly as if expecting it to jump out of his hands anyway. Curiosity overtook the ministry worker so he undid the cover on the container and peered in. All he saw was ashes.

Never realizing if he had looked only seconds earlier, his own belief in the guiltiness of the youth whose ashes he had held would be sorely shaken.

After all, how often is it you see a phoenix a sign of all that is good, in the ashes of a killer?

-8-

With a burst of small flames, Harry appeared in the middle of a park, a few meters away from a nearby playground. It was still early in the morning and no one was around to see the ugly little phoenix stranded helplessly. When Harry tried to stand up and walk a few steps, he quickly lost his balance as his weak little legs failed beneath him. Again and again, Harry fell down and nobody heard his desperate little trills.

Despite being miserable and frustrated, Harry did not give up. Figuring that a baby phoenix body was not sufficient for taking care of himself, he decided to transform back into a human. Changing back was quite similar to changing into an animal in the first place: you had to first transform mentally and then physically. Thankfully, the burning sensation Harry first felt did not reoccur. Unfortunately, Harry's human form apparently mirrored the age of his phoenix form...

Harry Potter was now less than a day old and the naked little infant crying in the park was no better off than he had been as a phoenix.

"Well this was unexpected..."

Chapter 8

News

In a gloomy house hidden in the unplotable recesses of Grimmauld Place, a group of wary wizard folk congregated around a large table situated in the basement. Among them paced Nymphadora Tonks who, in doing so, earned a good number of glares from her companions.

In her nervous fret, her hair changed a varying array of colors and her nose molded into at least a dozen shapes and sizes. Less nervous if not incredibly more exhausted sat Molly Weasley beside an empty chair reserved for her husband Arthur Weasley.

However, the said man was miles away doing paperwork at the ministry of magic. Several other people could be found floating around the room or nervously sitting around the table with folded hands or tapping fingers. One in particular, Severus Snape, was at the receiving end of Minerva McGonagall's meaningful looks which deliberately went ignored.

"Tonks dear, do stop pacing. I couldn't imagine trying to install new carpets in this retched place if you tread through the threadbare rugs already here."

Tonks saw through Molly's weak smile and noted the concern being directed towards her. Therefore, Tonks found something other than pacing on which to focus her attention. Looking around, she noticed a string slipping under the door and strode over. However, never having been the most coordinated of people, she tripped over the same route she had just been treading and fell flat on her face, her head missing the door by mere inches.

"It amazes me," drawled Snape, "the dexterity required of an Auror. One cannot imagine the comfort it gives me to know that our police force is so well trained."

"Severus! Was that really necessary?"

“I was not kidding, Minerva. Nymphadora’s skill truly astounds me. It makes one wonder how she passed her dueling exams... she clearly could not have passed on her skills alone. Perhaps she fell on her opponent?”

“It makes one wonder how you could have become a potions master, with hands so jittery. If you weren’t so crabby, it would appear you overdosed on pepper-up potion with the way you can’t sit still for two minutes!” At Minerva’s exclamation, snickers erupted from the other side of the door and the somber mood was temporarily forgotten. Snape immediately stopped tapping his fingers and sent a potent glare at his smug colleague.

Meanwhile, Tonks recovered herself with a blush, lifted herself from the floor, and opened the basement door to reveal the Weasley children on the other side. Fred and George sat nearest the threshold with what appeared to be an ear-on-a-string in their hands. Ron and Ginny sat two steps higher, leaning towards the door.

“George! Fred! Ronald! Ginevra! What don’t you understand about privacy? Get off the floor this instant!”

“Fancy seeing you here, mum.”

“Why, this looks like a party!”

“But why would our dear —”

“mother be having a party —”

“without us? No party —”

“is a real party without us!”

Molly scowled at the twins while Ginny and Ron just laughed. “Get upstairs now! If the information at this meeting was relevant to you, you would have been invited. And give me that Ear! I’ll have no more spying out of you!” Molly grabbed the Extendable Ear from one of her sons and began to motion them upstairs.

“But Mother! If you would just let –”

“us join the Order, –”

“we would not need –”

“to spy on you like this!”

“Maybe if you could learn to mind your own business, we’d find you trustworthy enough to be in the Order! However, because this is obviously not the case, I’d appreciate you going upstairs with Hermione! She seems to have sense enough to keep out of official matters.”

“No!” Ginny supplied. “She just doesn’t want to get caught. ‘I’m not going to be the one with extra chores today just because I can’t wait for someone to fill us in,’” she mocked.

“And plus,” Ron added, “She’ll just ask us what happened when we do get upstairs!”

“Oh Ronniekins! Tisn’t nice to tattle on your girlfriend!”

“If she finds out –”

“that you ratted her out –”

“you won’t get to snog today!” finished Fred.

Ron had the decency to blush before looking down at his feet. For the first time that morning, Tonks stopped worrying about the distraught Remus that left from headquarters that morning and let a small smile slip onto her face.

Some of the other Order members also revealed grins but Molly was as angry as ever. She appeared to be ready to berate her children once more when suddenly the shouts of Mrs. Black began to fill the house. Hermione appeared on the stairs followed closely behind by Dumbledore and Remus. The Weaselys stood up off of the steps and entered the room to allow more space on the stairway.

The most notable thing about the arrival was the expression on the faces of Dumbledore and Remus. Dumbledore looked older than anyone in the room had ever seen him and his hands shook against the railing. When he entered the room and lifted his head, every person was shocked by the dullness in the once sparkling eyes. The old man slowly made his way to the head of the table and tiredly sat down.

Remus, on the other hand, was far worse. Although most people had grown accustomed to the look of defeat on the werewolf's face over the last year, no one was ready for the intense expression of hopelessness visible in his amber eyes.

He strode across the room like someone approaching his execution, and upon reaching the table he slowly sat down. Tonks, with more concern in her eyes than anyone had ever seen, walked over to the much older man and placed a comforting hand on his shoulder, one which went unnoticed by the werewolf.

The room was silent save for the footsteps of Order member rearranging themselves. The teens sent inquisitive looks at each other and even the usually jovial twins sensed the subdued mood.

"Children, I think its time for you guys to go upstairs." Molly offered quietly, as if trying not to further upset the headmaster or Remus.

"No." came Dumbledore's quiet response. He raised his eyes to the five kids and motioned them to the table. Stealing a look at Remus, who appeared too deep in thought to protest, he continued, "Stay. You might as well be here for the meeting. You have just as much a right, if not more of one, to know and you'd find out anyway." He sighed. "It's better you find out now from me than from the papers."

Nervously, the children sat down at the table. Remus sat between Tonks and Dumbledore while Minerva and Snape sat at the headmaster's other side. Ginny, Hermione, Ron, Fred, and George respectively sat between Shackbolt and Jones while other Order members, like Dedalus Diggle and Elphias Doge, sat between the groups.

“Severus, I trust you have not informed anyone else of the situation?”

“No, Albus. Only Minerva.” was Snape’s quick reply.

There was a pregnant pause before Dumbledore resumed speaking. “As you all have probably concluded, something large has occurred today. New information came to my attention this morning, through a reliable source,” he nodded to Severus, “concerning events that happened a little over twelve months ago.” Dumbledore paused for a few seconds to let his companions think about what had happened.

Most people understood immediately that he was referring to Harry’s “betrayal” and waited intently for Dumbledore to continue. Realization took hold of Tonks’ features and she slid her arm around Remus to comfort the distraught man. Any mention of Harry over the last few months had sent Remus further into depression yet the most she could do was to comfort the man for which she cared about so much. However, Remus refused to raise his bloodshot eyes from the table.

“As you all remember, Harry Potter was convicted of murdering several occupants of the Leaky Cauldron last summer. It has only this morning come to my attention that we were wrong. Harry was innocent.”

The tension in the room was as thick as butter. Everyone sat still in disbelief. For the most part, it seemed that no one could comprehend the statement. It was Hermione, of course, who spoke first.

“It’s impossible.” she announced quietly. “There was... there was... too much pr-proof!” No one said anything, so she continued in a meek and stuttering voice. “No, no. He – he was seen. There were witnesses. He even ... testified under Veritaserum...” The last part was merely a whisper.

“No!” Remus’ vehement shout shook many of his companions from their stupor. He stood up and, with tears streaming down his face, yelled right at Hermione. “No! He’s innocent! INNOCENT! Like... like Sirius!” he sobbed. His voice slowly grew quieter with every word.

“He didn’t kill anyone. He-he couldn’t. He would never hurt anyone... like I told you... I told you he was innocent!” Right when it appeared Remus was going to choke on more sobs, he screamed, “you condemned him!”

At this point, he was no longer just talking to Hermione, who was in tears by this point, but to the entire group as well. “You might as well have killed him! You called him a traitor... and left him to rot in Azkaban like some rotten Death Eater! You all called him a murderer... him a Death Eater...”

Remus could no longer finish what he was saying. He shut his eyes as tightly as he could and collapsed in his chair. Tonks embraced him, rubbing his back as she did so, but the werewolf was little comforted. Everyone sat in the tense environment for several silent moments, merely watching Remus’ hysterical sobs or Hermione in silent tears. Dumbledore finally began talking again after he felt he had appropriated enough time for Remus to calm down.

“This morning it was revealed that Harry was framed for his crimes by none other than Voldemort himself. He never murdered anyone, not his schoolmates nor the barkeeper Tom. He was not even present at the attack.”

“But how?” Hestia Jones asked quietly. “How was it possible? Veritaserum cannot be overcome.”

“The means do not matter at the moment; simply, Voldemort found a way.”

Suddenly, Ginny stood up with fervor akin to the previous display of Remus. “Then what are you waiting for! Remove him from Azkaban! If you know he’s innocent, you can prove it!”

Everyone looked attentively at Dumbledore who met Ginny’s eyes with great reluctance. Everyone knew of her feelings towards the youth, and despite all appearances until recently, she herself could be called to almost resemble Remus in despair.

But everyone knows the strength of Molly Weasley who simply allowed her daughter to cry and to grieve for the loss of what she believed...

Was her daughter's childhood crush...

Meanwhile, Remus merely shook his head in further sadness as he tries not to choke on pained emotions...

"Miss Weasley, if you would calm down and sit I will continue. Thank you. This morning, as you may or not have been aware, Harry turned seventeen. Therefore, he officially became an adult today. Adults with criminal records are treated differently than children with criminal records, and, as so, Harry is no longer a juvenile prisoner."

"Stop beating around the bush Albus!" Snape snapped impatiently.

"This morning, at 6:00 AM, he was executed."

Remus' demeanor was the only one that did not change. Everyone else sat frozen in their seats, some with mouths open and others with jaws tense. Ron seemed unable to comprehend the news while Hermione seemed unable to stop crying. Ginny slid into her chair and began weeping. Minerva's face paled considerably and Snape sat at the table with tightened lips.

They had all, save Remus, come to believe that their friend Harry had gone to the dark side. They had thought Harry did the unthinkable... and they had thus ignored him when they needed him most. At first, Hermione and the Weaselys had held onto hope that it was a mistake... but after the initial evidence was presented, they felt they could not deny the facts. During the only time they saw Harry between the arraignment and the verdict; they had called him some horrible things and turned their backs on him.

Of course, they were not necessarily wrong for doing what they did, with the information presented. They had only sent bitter words towards him under the belief that he had betrayed them and murdered fellow classmates. They had truly believed he had sided with their enemies. And now they knew they had been wrong.

That feeling deep in their souls since they condemned him with their beliefs of everything had erupted into a pain filled anguish.

The implications sunk in. Their best friend had missed school for a year. He had spent an entire year in Azkaban.

Right after Sirius' death, for which both Ron and Hermione, the two Harry had considered his best friends. Knew how much the death of his godfather had hurt and that the nightmares of it troubled him for days afterward...

While still grieving, more weight had been added to the boy's shoulders and he had been abandoned by his friends. He had suffered from dementors (and Merlin! Everyone knew Harry's horrible reaction to them) and had been reportedly driven to non responsiveness. And now, when they finally discovered they were wrong and could possibly repent for their abandonment, could possibly help Harry recover, he was killed.

Executed.

Most likely by dementors, no less.

They would never see their friend again and had only last seen him on horrible terms.

Needless to say, the despondency that seized the room was suffocating.

The first one to talk was Snape. Either out of bitterness or out of inability to cope with the death of his enemy's only son, he said the wrong thing. "Is that all, Albus?"

"Is that all!" came Molly's frenzied cry. "Bloody hell, Snape! What in the name of Merlin is wrong with you!"

And after that, there was chaos. Various order members began shouting at one another, the greatest offender of which was Mrs. Weasley herself. Meanwhile, other persons, such as Hermione and

Ron, found it impossible to converse with one another about the horrible news.

After all it was through Harry that they had bonded so closely...

Instead, they sat in tense, depressed silence. Remus, having calmed into stilled shock, utilized this time to escape the chaotic room and head upstairs. Tailing him was a concerned Tonks.

When they arrived upstairs in one of the spare bedrooms, Remus collapsed on the bed with his head in his hands and his elbows on his knees.

"Remus..." Tonks offered, while shutting the door quietly behind her.

"I cannot do it. I can't."

"Remus, I'm sorry..."

"I can't go on like this!" Remus appeared to have given up hope in the world. He sat on the bed, unable to cry anymore. "The Order... I can't do it. The world's too heavy now... I used to have James and Sirius and Peter... then James died and Peter supposedly as well, and I thought Sirius was a traitor! But even then, I still held hope for Harry. But now, Sirius is gone as well and Peter is the traitor... still alive... and no one is left! Harry kept me going... knowing a legacy of James existed... it kept me alive."

Tonks sat down on the bed and hugged Remus as tightly as she could. "I'm sorry, so sorry." She mumbled on, trying to sooth the despondent man. However, Remus stood up, lightly pushing her away, and turned his back to her.

"You have to understand, Tonks. I cannot do this! It's too much! We... can't continue..."

"Remus..."

"I love you Tonks." He turned around, eyes brimming with tears once more. "I love you. I love you. Merlin, you have no idea how good it

feels to say that. But... I cannot continue. I need a break... a vacation... you have to understand..."

"You're going to leave?"

"Yes."

"For how long?" Remus was unable to answer, and instead looked at the floor. "I'll be waiting, Moony."

"Forgive me, Tonks. I need time alone. I'll go to muggle London I suppose... or somewhere farther. Yes, much farther. Don't let anyone follow me."

"I won't."

Remus did not know what else to say. Both Tonks and Remus stood there several moments, vainly searching for something more to say, but nothing came. Without raising his head to look at Tonks once more, he turned and left. Even when the rest of the Order noted his absence several hours later, no one sought him out.

Chapter 9

Playground

Needless to say, Jackson Tulane was stunned. The tall, lean man in his early thirties had made a habit out of jogging every morning. He enjoyed trying different routes but more often than not he did a moderately-paced five kilometers in the nearby park.

But today he had witnessed something strange. Sure, he'd seen some miscellaneous things while running. Once, he witnessed a hold-up in a local convenience store and later had to testify in court. Another time, he stumbled across two less than friendly adolescents engaged in a relatively vicious fistfight. However, out of everything he had ever witnessed during his runs, none was as strange as this instance.

At 7:30 AM on July 31, 1997, Jackson Tulane found a baby. No, not a toddler that had strayed too far from his mother or a child in a temporarily abandoned stroller... Jackson Tulane had found an infant.

First he had heard some wailing a distance from his path. Not one to find something in distress, human or creature, and leave it be, he following the desperate cries. He wandered off the sidewalk, around a playground with some old rusty swings, and to some hedges nearby.

It was there that upon some scorched grass Jackson found a tiny infant. Although he was no expert in children, he was able to surmise that the child must have recently been born and needed immediate attention. Awkwardly, Jackson began shushing the baby and tentatively reached out to pick it up. However, when his hands closed around the tiny head and torso of the newborn baby, the wailing child immediately ceased its cries. Jackson was again surprised when tiny alert green eyes met his own instead of the confused and pained ones he had been expecting. Jackson instinctively drew the child to his chest and stood there clueless for several moments wondering what to do.

He finally settled on using his cell phone to call the authorities and notify them about this abandoned child. The officer on the other end

of the line told him to wait where he found the child in case its parents turned up nearby. Then, after the call ended, Jackson found himself in an awkward situation: he had to wait ten or fifteen minutes for the police to arrive, and, until then, he had to watch over a young abandoned infant.

Naturally, Jackson began pondering the obvious questions. Who abandoned the baby? Why did they just leave an infant unattended in a relatively empty park? Where were its parents? Was it a boy or a girl? A quick glance down confirmed that it was a boy. In that case, how old was he? How long had he been laying there, naked and wailing? Furthermore, why was the ground around him scorched? Then a horrible idea suddenly struck Jackson: maybe this was all part of some sick satanic ritual... he had read things about cruel teenagers performing “magical” rituals, worshipping the devil, and mercilessly slaughtering animals for these purposes. In fact, some recent fires and acts of violence and destruction had recently been attributed to a rise of teenagers involved in the occult. If not for some sadistic ritual, then why else would an infant be abandoned on a small circle of burnt grass?

Jackson also began observing the child as well. For some reason or another, the child seemed to be content. He was no longer wailing and appeared to be taking in his surroundings. However, the child was far too young to display that level of comprehension... right? Nevertheless, the baby remained eerily silent.

About twenty minutes after the call had been made, two cars with sirens sounding and lights flashing approached the playground where Jackson was uncomfortably waiting.

Surprisingly, the noise and lights did not seem to bother the infant at all.

Moments later, a police officer approached Jackson and began interrogating him. A second officer parted from the police vehicle and neared his coworker. All in all, it was decided that the infant should probably get immediate medical attention and then be sent to the city’s childcare authorities. Jackson agreed to answer more questions while at the police station and graciously followed the officers to their

cars. However, before handing the child to the authorities, Jackson petted the baby's messy, jet black hair one last time, brushing the tresses to the side just enough to reveal an unmarred forehead.

-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-

Not far away, in fact just on the other side of the park Jackson was in walked a somber man whose face was stricken with lines of age and despair. The man had graying brown hair and peculiar amber eyes filled with hopelessness and emotional agony. His name was Remus Lupin and he was grieving.

Remus had not known where to go after leaving Grimmauld Place. He had considered apparating to England's southern border and taking a muggle airline to France or Spain. Maybe Italy. All Remus knew was that he needed to get as far away from his past as possible.

However, before leaving, there was one thing that Remus knew he must do. With all of his recent memories of Harry full of tragedy, he needed to visit the sites of Harry's childhood. He needed proof that his best friend's only son had indeed been an innocent child at one point, oblivious to the cruelties of the world he had yet to enter.

Oblivious of Voldemort.

Oblivious of betrayal.

He needed to remember that a young Harry had once had no serious worries... only petty problems that occasionally afflict the average eight-year-old.

And so, with this desperate need, Remus found himself in Little Whinging, Surrey. He found himself patrolling the streets of Magnolia Crescent and Privet Drive. He knew how oddly out of place he must have appeared: his ragged appearance and old, weathered clothes contrasted against the neatly trimmed lawns of these identically proper houses.

Remus found himself before the well-kept abode of number four Privet Drive. His acute werewolf sense of hearing could detect the

sound of the Dursleys going about their daily lives in the kitchen of their home. Harry had once lived there. Sure, he had been miserable... but he had been safe. He had not yet known betrayal. He had at least been alive. Nevertheless, since then, Harry had been convicted and sent to prison.

The Dursleys had taken the news very well. Vernon had insisted that the boy had always had a mean streak in him and that this act of violence had been long coming. Dudley did not seem to grasp the impact of the entire circumstance and was simply happy to have Harry gone. Petunia, on the other hand, had gone silent and pale upon hearing the news.

Other than that, the Dursley lives were unchanged. And with this Remus was upset... Harry's own family did not miss him. And now, on the morning of Harry's demise, they were completely ignorant.

Unable to bear these horrible truths, Remus continued walking. He walked and walked until he found himself in a nearby park. Harry had been here too. Harry had once told him about the times Dudley had played "Harry Hunting" with his unruly gang. Sure, the game was not fun for Harry but at least it never killed him.

As Remus approached the playground at which Harry had also probably played, he noticed some muggle authorities congregated beyond the swings. There were two officers and a man holding something. These men, like the Dursleys, were also oblivious to the tragic events of the morning. They also did not realize how much Remus had lost in that one morning alone. Again unable to endure his despair, Remus fled the scene of muggles and left them to their own affairs. He walked a little ways away and apparated as far away as possible.

Never knowing that if he had stopped to look for but a moment...

He might have had something to live for.

Hope...

Chapter 10

Meeting one

Seven years later...

In a small, cluttered, yet pleasantly colored office, Sara Lieberman sat in front of a desk full of legal papers. Sara's desk was covered in vacation souvenirs that she got from her honeymoon and picture frames that all bore either relatives or close friends. Between these sentimental trinkets that adorned her desk were an array of opened envelopes, government documents, and case files. All the photographs were still, all the envelopes had postage stamps, and all the documents were typed. Sara was a muggle.

It was this little fact about Sara, her muggle background and subsequent ignorance that a magical world even existed, that led to her complete bafflement over the case currently in front of her. She could not simply make heads nor tails over the case of one young John Doe.

John Doe was a ward of the British government. He had no reported family and no one had adopted him. Looking at a picture of the boy when he was about three, Sara could not understand why no one would adopt the adorable little boy. After all, he had a cute, round little face, boyishly handsome black hair, and striking green eyes. John Doe was the perfect image of what couples looking to adopt might desire in a child.

Nevertheless, his foster reports told separate tales. The boy's history itself was a mystery. He was found by a young man, Jackson Tulane, on the morning of July 31, 1997 and a medical examination revealed that he could not have been more than a couple days old at most, if even that. The child had been abandoned in a park in some city outside of London but did not appear to be in any poor condition as might be expected from an unwanted child. Rather, the boy was in perfect health. The most interesting thing about the child's discovery, however, was the bed of scorched grass on which he was found.

After ten weeks when no relatives had come forward to claim the child despite the numerous newspaper ads, the young boy became a ward of the British government. He was given the standard name of John Doe and was soon entered into the foster care system as well. The foster agency workers had originally assumed he would be adopted right away but quickly found they were mistaken. It seemed that John Doe was not a normal child.

His original foster caretakers, the McCormicks, reported nothing too unusual when asked about him. He was just a young baby like any other who had passed through their care.

Sort of.

However, when further questioned eight months ago, they did admit he was a bit strange, although they could not pinpoint exactly what. Perhaps it was his lack of cooing, or his eerie level of awareness, or maybe the level of intelligence they perceived in his striking green eyes.

However, they had always brushed these things aside during his six-month stay with them because these things could always just have been their imagination. Only one observation about John Doe was certain though... the McCormicks never once heard him cry.

The strangeness encompassing the John Doe boy became more pronounced with reports from his following foster parents. Kara O'Donnell, a longtime caretaker in the foster care system, reported that he did not develop like a normal baby his age might. At the age when most children produce their first smile, John Doe remained expressionless and when he finally did wear his first smile it was a small, shy, and unnaturally intelligent smile in addition to being months later than normal.

Kevin and Sally Jones mentioned that, like smiling, the usual playmate baby toys did not interest the small child either. Any of the colorful and interactive toys they provided were quickly dismissed and ignored by little John.

Miguel and Juanita Rodriguez, who also fostered the little boy during his first two years, were quick to mention that he was a silent yet highly intelligent child. Not only did he never cry nor complain he never talked either.

Young John Doe was already two and a half before he made his first attempt at speaking; in a complete sentence, albeit with mispronounced words, he had politely asked to look at Mr. Rodriguez's newspaper.

As Sara went through reports of John Doe's foster parents, she noticed occurrence after occurrence of his comprehension beyond his years. Although smiling and speaking and reaching other milestones later than normal, he had been potty trained abnormally early and had apparently learned to read by age three. In fact, the caretakers stated that not only was he reading secondary-school material at an early age but that it seemed he was more than a quick learner; rather, it appeared as if John Doe already knew how to read.

Continuing through the statements issued by John Doe's past foster families, Sara noticed that the boy got stranger as he went from age three to age four. In the temporary custody of Joanne Gloucester, John Doe always sat amidst weird happenings. Poor Joanne would often walk into John's room only to find his toys floating, the heavy furniture rearranged, and the wallpaper changed. Before her very eyes she claimed to have witnessed John Doe ignite into flames and then simply disappear on several occasions. The strangest report of all, however, was when she claimed to have seen the young boy of four transform into a mystical-looking bird. Needless to say, Joanne was promptly taken out of the foster system after John Doe was removed from her custody.

Although Joanne's statements at the time they were issued seemed to be completely outrageous, Sara was beginning to see more credibility in them now that she had other John Doe reports laid out before her. Though no one else's statements reported incidents as unlikely as Joanne's, other foster families noted that they had found items previously out of John's reach somehow hidden around the house.

Some mentioned strange noises coming from whatever room John was in and others even noted the strange manner with which John would interact with stray animals. Sara concluded that the strange happenings had begun when John was almost four and, after Joanne's custody, had gradually become less and less obvious and suspicious.

Sara looked once more at the last known picture ever taken of little John Doe. In it, the boy of nearly six was sitting on a swing in a neighborhood park. The photo was taken by Raymond Richards and was obviously not candid. John Doe wore a tentative smile and his eyes were focused on the camera. Eerie eyes, Sara thought. Those eyes, which were an unusual emerald hue, seemed to glow unnaturally from the petite face on which they were placed. Yes, Sara thought, John Doe had the strangest eyes she had ever seen.

This picture had been taken exactly nine months ago. Today was April 21, 2004, and John Doe had not been seen for eight months, ever since suddenly and mysteriously disappearing from the aforementioned Richards couple. Authorities were currently investigating the disappearance and had collected statements from all of the boy's previous caretakers, the Richards, Rodriguezs, McCormicks, and Ms. Gloucester all included and copies of some of these statements had been faxed over to the foster agency.

Sara began putting the files and documents back into the cabinets finally when her office phone rang. Upon answering it, she was met with tragic news. Melissa and Joshua Lieberman, her in-laws, had fell victim to the latest of a series of British terrorist attacks. Quickly packing up the last of the documents, Sara hurried out the office door and rushed to meet her distraught husband waiting impatiently at home. By this point, all thoughts about the mysterious boy John Doe had completely left her head.

In a small, family-owned bakery in the heart of London, a scruffy-looking kid could be seen nibbling on a fresh pastry while counting up a small handful of change. The child, who looked no older than seven, had on an old and dirty T-shirt, a weathered pair of pants, and a pair of shoes with worn soles and several holes. He held himself in such a way, with shoulders slumped and head tilted downward, that he

escaped most people's attention. Beneath a mop of messy black hair you could see that his brows were scrunched together in deep concentration and below them were the most spectacular green eyes. Not only were those eerie eyes the strangest hue of green but also they held years of intelligence and knowledge that surpassed the boy's apparent age.

By this point, Harry had finished his breakfast and snatched a discarded newspaper as he made his way outside. He quickly scanned the first few pages, taking notice of several attacks and reportedly "freak accidents" that had occurred around the city of London. With sad eyes, the boy realized that the average Londoner was quick to believe that these deaths were simply the result of a new wave of violence or unexpected bad luck. However, he was not the "average Londoner" and therefore knew that there were more to these incidents. This boy's name was Harry Potter though the world simply saw him as another John Doe passing on the sidewalk.

Years ago, Harry had survived and escaped his execution after a one-year stay at the wizarding prison Azkaban. It had been pure luck that his Animagus form, a phoenix, was a creature of fire. Therefore, by first transforming mentally he survived the Dementor's kiss because animals were immune to it and then survived the crematory by finishing the transformation physically. The only problem with this miraculous escape was that the transformation into a magical creature had some adverse side effects: Harry had been completely de-aged during the process of his "Burning Day."

It was for this reason that Harry James Potter, who should have been 23, currently looked like a even-year-old. On that summer day seven years ago when he had first realized he had the body of a baby, he had screamed like hell hoping someone could help him in his vulnerable body. Fortunately, some passing man had found him, rescued him, and that's when Harry's young body had become over exhausted and the boy knew no more.

He later found out that he had been brought to a foster agency where after several weeks of no one looking for him (which made sense considering everyone he knew thought he was dead, a heartless murderer, and would never suspect him a baby) he was given the

ambiguous name John Doe. As much as he'd rather have a better name chosen out for himself, the muscles in his tongue and mouth were still too young to properly talk (as if that would appear normal anyway) and he could not feasibly rename himself Harry again without risking being found out by the wizarding world.

For Harry, entering the foster care system had been an interesting experience. Although a loving, stable home is the ideal place for a child, the occasionally changing households had still been better than his childhood with the Dursleys. Most of the foster parents had been caring and loving, although too much part of the system to become overly attached, and also far more responsible than Petunia and Vernon had ever been.

For the first time in his life, other people had actually taken care of him and provided him with enough love, food, clothes, and toys. Granted, most of the toddler toys did not interest him; after all, he had seen too much in the world for bright colored buttons to entertain him, but all of the gestures were still well received by his childlike mind. The hardest part about being an infant, however, was his inability to do things he once took for granted and his inexperience at acting as a developing child. Therefore, he often had no clue when he should or should not have been developing.

Around age two, Harry knew he should have started speaking already. However, he had found no reason to and he had no idea how fast his vocabulary should be progressing. He finally "broke the milestone" by speaking in a full sentence one day, though this probably was not his best idea. It was also around this time that he began wondering about his phoenix form. It should have gotten bigger and more useful by this age and he was yearning to try the transformation again. One day, when his caretakers were far away, he ventured the transformation again and found it much easier and less painful than the previous time. In a second flat, he was a bird with brilliant plumage and he slowly taught himself how to fly and use his phoenix powers.

Whenever he was given alone time, Harry would transform again and utilize his new perspective. What interested him the most, though, was his phoenix eyesight. As a phoenix, Harry Potter could not only see perfectly but he could see magic too. There might not have been

much magic in his muggle households but Harry did manage to see his own magic swirling around him. It was these observations that led Harry to attempt a new venture: he planned to undergo only a partial transformation. It took several months to perfect, but by age three, he had managed to alter his human eyes just enough to give him phoenix eyesight, thus changing the color of his eyes slightly and preventing him from ever needing glasses again.

Now being able to see magic as a human, Harry began his magical experimentation, the same experiments that would accidentally drive Miss Gloucester out of the foster care system. After practice, he began feeling the magic in his body and attempting to funnel it into his surroundings. Try after try, the colors of the magical swirls began having special meanings and his hands no longer felt empty without a wand. By age four and a half, Harry had nearly perfected basic wandless magic, an area of which he was barely aware a few years prior, and he could now use his skills discreetly without notifying his guardians.

There were only two considerable obstacles with which Harry Potter was faced: he had no guidance from magical texts nor teachers and therefore had to figure out a whole new field of magical theory himself, and also his young, little body was still too magically underdeveloped to allow him to use his magic as freely as he may have wished.

Fortunately, Harry was smarter than he would have previously admitted and, with more free time than he ever had as a teenager, became a quick learner; in addition, by the time he was age six, his body had matured enough to grant him more access to his overwhelming magical reserves.

It was when he had reached this magical milestone that he decided it was about time to leave the foster care system. He timed his escape perfectly and left one day while his guardians had their attention somewhere else. All of the clothes he had been generously bought, which actually fit him for once, had been packed the night before and no one noticed him leave. Once far enough from the neighborhood, he began trekking to downtown London where he figured there would be the most opportunity to live comfortably on the streets. He would use his magic to protect him from any dangerous muggles and he

would avoid wizard folk at all costs now that he could detect their magical signatures.

It took several weeks before he could settle himself down, but Harry soon fell into a comfortable pattern of sleeping in abandoned buildings, finding spare change on the sidewalk, and accepting any generous offerings of either money or food he could get. He often used his money to buy cheap foods from convenience stores or little food stores and he also took much of the breads from local delis that would be discarded at the end of each workday.

Very recently, he had taken up pick-pocketing as well although he felt guilty every time he did so; alas, often the option was steal from a passerby walking to his or her car or starve for the day and with this notion some of Harry's guilt diminished. Pick-pocketing, of course, was not as easy as they had made it out to seem on TV, but with practice he had improved enough to rarely get caught doing it. All in all, Harry Potter certainly was not living in luxury but he was getting by just as fine as he cared to.

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Arabella Figg was getting old these days and could not get around as easily as she once could. She had long ago moved out of Magnolia Crescent, no longer able to take the stuffy suburban life now that she no longer was on an assignment for the Order, and she had moved into the city thinking she would be able to get around fine. Alas, the years had obviously taken their toll on her body and the busy city life was not treating the old squib well either.

It was one day in late April, the 21st to be exact, when she found herself walking to the grocer's from her apartment. She would have taken a cab as she normally did but the morning was just too gorgeous to resist; after all, this had to have been the first warm morning since the severely cold winter had ended four weeks ago. It was during the relatively normal walk back when the event happened: a kid ran into her and she dropped all her bags. She was about to let out a string of complaints to the rude child when he suddenly bent down to pick up her bags and issued a rushed, though sincere, apology.

“Oh I’m sorry Miss! I wasn’t looking where I was going and I should have. I hope all your groceries are fine, here you go,” he rushed out as he stood up and handed Arabella the bags, “but I really ought to be going. Won’t happen again, sorry!”

Arabella was temporarily glued on her feet as she heard the boy’s voice. It was familiar! But, who could it be? It even sounded like... ‘but no, it could not be him,’ she thought. ‘He’s dead.’ Nevertheless, as the trashy-looking boy lifted up his head to reveal the face below the black mop of hair, she saw the last thing she expected to see.

Their eyes made contact for a brief second in which several things happened. First, the child’s remarkable green eyes which had been panicked a few seconds prior had suddenly frozen on her face. Second, his hands fell to his side, dropping a wallet to the cement. Third, she got a very good look at the boy’s face. There, right before Arabella’s very own, albeit aged and spectacled eyes stood a seven-year-old Harry Potter.

The moment lasted a split second before an angry, nearing voice interrupted the meeting with a rant. “I’ll get you, you filthy rat! Come back here you good-fer-nuthin’ scoundrel! Give me back my wallet you pig-headed little bastard...”

With this loud, deep voice filling the street, both parties broke out of their reveries and the Harry look-alike stooped to the ground, head bent. Mumbling another apology, almost intelligible, the boy grabbed the wallet he had dropped and quickly ran off in the opposite direction of the fast-approaching and intimidating man. A few seconds later, the boy was gone and the only indication that he had not simply been a figment of her imagination was the passing man screaming, “Help! He stole my wallet!” and the bruise forming on her wrinkly arms.

A few minutes later, Arabella had broken out of her stupor and began speed-walking home with newfound vigor. Upon reaching her apartment door, she quickly yet carefully dropped her groceries near the entrance and made her way to the mantel above her fireplace. She reached into a dusty eyesore of a vase, pulled out a handful of powder, and threw it into the fireplace that had suddenly and

unexpectedly ignited with flames. When these flames suddenly turned an emerald hue, old Arabella Figg stuck her head in the fire and shouted as loudly as she could,

“Hogwarts, Headmaster Dumbledore’s office!”

Chapter 11

Meeting two

Miles and miles away from London, near a little town in Scotland, beside a forest of trees and wildlife some would call enchanted, in a tower of a thousand-year-old stone castle, sat a most extraordinary office. In fact, with all of the shiny and colorful trinkets scattered about the room, one could only know it was an office by the presence of an ornate looking desk and the piles of papers that sat upon it.

Peering over paper after paper was a tall aged man with a cascading white beard and crescent shaped spectacles. This man, Albus Dumbledore, was as busy as one could be. He held the responsibility of simultaneously running one of the most prestigious Wizarding schools in Europe, acting as a personal advisor, albeit an often ignored one, to the Minister of Magic, Rufus Scrimgeour, and leading the Order of the Phoenix, an opposition against Lord Voldemort.

Dumbledore had caught the said potions master Snape had told him about three years ago on the anniversary of Harry's death and the man had confessed to the crimes he had committed.

Fudge after this revelation he had revealed about Harry's innocence had been ousted faster then you can see Voldemort.

After all he was the man who had killed all of humanity's last hope.

Yes, the papers nowadays covered all the deaths being attributed to not just 'terrorists' per say in the muggle papers. But also covered the rise in deaths all over the world...

With nothing to live for, no one to give them hope. The light was steadily losing.

It was April 21, 2004, when suddenly the headmaster's hearth burst into emerald flames. One moment later did the head of an elderly woman appear in the fireplace. Her face was strained in barely restrained excitement and her eyes were sparkling with enthusiasm.

“Ah, Arabella! Good afternoon. To what do I owe this pleasure?”

“Albus! Harry Potter is alive!”

Suddenly, Dumbledore’s pleasant smile dissipated, his eyes grew sad, and his posture drooped slightly. With a sigh, he remorsefully began, “Arabella, you must be mistaken. Harry died seven years ago.”

“No! I’ve never been more positive! I saw him with my own two eyes... he’s alive and on the streets of London!” With that statement, some of Dumbledore’s sorrow transformed into skepticism as he gave her a knowing look and adjusted his own glasses. “Albus! I know what I saw... I ran into him on the streets, and I didn’t just recognize him... he recognized me, too!”

“Well, my dear, why don’t you step through the floo and take a seat and tell me exactly what happened,” he responded kindly, motioning to a cushioned seat in front of his desk. A second later, the head of Mrs. Arabella Figg disappeared only to be replaced by her entire body as she carefully stepped through the fireplace. Once the squib was settled in the seat, Dumbledore motioned for her to continue and she began her account.

However, as soon as she mentioned the apparent age of Harry Potter, Dumbledore’s aged eyes closed hopelessly. As hard as it was for him to believe that Harry Potter had survived both the Dementor’s Kiss and his cremation, Dumbledore simply could not let himself believe that Harry was also de-aged.

“As wonderful as the prospect of Harry’s return sounds, it’s simply too improbable.”

“Improbable! Not impossible!”

“I’m sure this was just a case of mistaken identity, Arabella. I’m sorry you have gotten so worked up over it, but it’s probably best if you just forget the incident and go home and have some rest. I’m sure Hestia Jones would be glad to come over sometime and give you company too.”

“Albus! Merlin’s beard, just believe me this once. It was Harry! I should know, Merlin knows I’ve babysat him enough as a child... those Dursleys always abandoned him at my place.”

“Arabella—”

“He had the same messy black hair, the same bright green eyes, how could I mistake them? The same—”

“Arabella—”

“lanky build... and it sounded just like him, too, and—”

“Arabella!” At Dumbledore’s outburst, the old squib’s ramblings were stopped mid-sentence. Dumbledore had risen to his full height, and his eyes were shimmering beneath their spectacles as if they were moist. His face revealed a mix of sorrow, disappointment, and discomfort. When he finally regained his composure several minutes later, he sat back down behind his desk and dropped his aged head into his hands, his elbows sitting amidst the papers on his desk.

“Arabella, I’m sorry. I’m sorry for my outburst, but I’m sorry for this misconception. In the midsummer of 1997, I saw Harry Potter fall to the ground soulless. I saw it Arabella, and I’ll forever know my fault in his death. Alas, not even a miracle can undo the mistakes that have been made, and not even the boy-who-lived could return from the other world. I wish you were right, I truly wish it... but, it is simply impossible.”

Arabella sat motionless in her chair, her eyes downcast, seemingly contemplative of the past few minutes she had spent in the headmaster’s office. Doubts were forming in her head when he finally resumed his speech.

“It was probably a trick of the light, or an effect of fatigue, or even a coincidental resemblance. I apologize for the consequence this must have had on your mood, but I think that a good night sleep may be in order.”

“Of course, Albus. You’re probably right. It was just that... it really looked like him. I suppose I might have filled in the details, the resemblance I saw might have just been hopes... yes, yes, you’re probably correct.”

Before the somber conversation could continue any further, a quick rap was heard on the door. In fact, the headmaster had been so consumed by the emotional exchange between himself and Arabella that he failed to even anticipate the visitors outside, as he usually could. After a quick glance at his desk, he announced, “Ah, come in Remus, Kingsley.”

As usual, the people entering the office were confused by Dumbledore’s seeming all-knowingness. Shrugging it off, though, they entered the room. Upon seeing Mrs. Figg in the room, the two occupants stopped, wondering silently if they were interrupting.

“Good afternoon. Feel free to join us, we were simply enjoying a little discussion.” Despite the warm greeting, both Kingsley Shacklebolt and Remus Lupin could tell the discussion must have been far from enjoyable simply by the subdued atmosphere of the room.

“Is everything alright?” Lupin questioned cautiously, wary of further upsetting the other two elderly occupants.

“Oh no, it’s fine, I’ve calmed down, now. It’s just that I thought I saw Harry Pot—”

“So how can I help you?” Dumbledore interrupted, watching Lupin’s reaction closely. Shacklebolt, catching onto the name Arabella Figg had been about to say, and knowing how sensitive a topic this was for Lupin, quickly tried to change the subject by answering Dumbledore’s question. However, Harry Potter was both a sensitive and important topic for Lupin, and so, not to be deterred, he interrupted his companion, barely allowing Shacklebolt to get a word in.

“What about Harry Potter, Arabella?” Lupin questioned sternly, completely turning his sight from Dumbledore’s worried face.

Immediately realizing her mistake, the old squib tried to cover up her slip. "Oh it was nothing, forget about it." Meanwhile, Dumbledore stood nervously, glancing between the occupants.

"No, you said you saw Harry Potter... what did you mean?"

"Remus! It was nothing, don't worry about it. Forget I mentioned it."

"Where did you see him?"

"Remus, I think this is quite enough." Dumbledore stood his full height once more, pressuring Lupin to back down. "Arabella came to me with private matters, and I would appreciate if you respected our privacy."

Lupin's shoulders slumped and he looked downwards, quietly apologizing to the headmaster.

"It's quite alright, Remus. I apologize you had to overhear such a delicate subject. However, I believe you came to my office with a purpose, and at the moment, my attention is completely yours. I believe you have some news regarding your... assignment?"

"Ah yes," Shacklebolt stepped in, relieving Remus of the unwanted attention. "At the moment, the ministry is tightening its regulations on werewolves. Because their allegiance is becoming so doubtful, and due to the general prejudice against them, Scrimgeour is feeling pressured into enacting more and more regulatory policies. I wouldn't be surprised if in another month or two, the government is reinstating the Werewolf Capture Act of 1978 and publishing the Werewolf Registry, as if it's not hard enough for a werewolf to find employment," he continued, giving a sideways glance at Lupin who was looking distracted. He looked back at Dumbledore and continued.

"Unfortunately, I believe these actions are only making matters worse, as some pro-magical creature groups have suggested. The Coalition Against Inhumane Treatment of Non-Humans have proposed to the minister himself and the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures that isolating these groups, like the werewolves

and vampires, only further encourages them to join Voldemort. From what Lupin has gathered, they have it mostly right. Lupin?"

Taking his cue, Lupin broke out of his memories and began explaining to Dumbledore the situation regarding the werewolves. Unfortunately, most of the news was bad. Fenrir Greyback was recruiting more followers than ever, especially considering the measures the government was taking against the entire werewolf population. As Lupin explained, it was getting so bad that even mothers and their children were siding with Greyback, and therefore Voldemort too, in order to receive protection from the Ministry of Magic. Lupin had been assigned to observe the werewolf community and offer Order of the Phoenix assistance to those still willing to oppose, or at least not side with, Voldemort, but his offers and pleas were reaching deaf ears; Voldemort's offers were simply too impressive.

After the brief report, Dumbledore's mood was more subdued than ever. By this point, his concern for the welfare of werewolves weighed more heavily on his mind than did the prospect of Harry Potter's unexpected survival. With a solemn nod of his head, he dismissed the two members of the Order of the Phoenix, leaving himself and Arabella alone. Before the old squib left his office too, Albus got one last comment in.

"Alas, Arabella, thank you for telling me what you believed to see, but please understand that there are more important matters than chasing improbable hopes and wishes. Hope is a delicate thing; it is a fire that can both guide and blind." With that, Arabella Figg stepped into the fire.

Hours later, the old woman awoke to her doorbell ringing viciously. Pulling her old and worn-down body out of bed, she found her slippers and quickly glanced over at the clock. 12:56 AM.

Who in the world could be bothering her at this time, she wondered briefly. She slowly made her way through her bedroom, hallway, and parlor and soon found herself before the door. Her eyesight was too poor to distinguish the figure on the other side of the peephole and she hesitated to unlock the door.

What if there were Death Eaters, prepared to send a blunt message to all those who are willing to assist the Order of the Phoenix? Nevertheless, she was old, tired, and strong-willed. If by any chance death were to meet her at her own front door, she would give it a kind and proud reception. Gathering her courage, she opened the door, and her eyes befell an exhausted and gaunt face.

She stood at her threshold, baffled, as Remus Lupin questioned, "Where did you see Harry Potter?"

Chapter 12

Found?

Harry had been very cautious over the last few days. He knew for certain that Mrs. Figg had recognized him as well. He also knew that she would go straight to Dumbledore.

He wasn't sure what he thought about Dumbledore now. The man had not done anything to help aide Harry. Dumbledore had thought he was guilty. They all did.

Everyone except for Remus...

The old werewolf was the only one who came to visit him. The only one who tried to get him to escape during that year by reminding him of Sirius... and what his godfather had done to save him.

As he had aged, he had only spared a few thoughts on Dumbledore and the Order. Harry focused more on his magic. If one thing was certain, it was that Harry didn't want Dumbledore to find him.

Everywhere he went, Harry cautiously looked over his shoulder. He expected the Order to swoop down on him any minute. Hearing his stomach rumble, Harry knew he needed to get food today. As he made his way through the local park, he kept his eyes out for any magical auras in the immediate area.

After learning of his ability he had used it every time he ventured out. He knew Voldemort was still out there. The muggle newspapers were full of strange accidents. The paper he had nicked this morning hadn't been any exception. Another building had blown up, presumably from a gas leak.

Harry had been able to steal money out of a woman's purse at the park this morning as she tended to her two small children. He made his way to the local bakery to get something for his breakfast.

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“Where is he Arabella? Where did you see Harry?” Remus asked fervently.

Arabella moved aside to let the man in. She had known Remus Lupin a long time and knew how much the man had cared for Harry. When she thought about it, she really wasn’t surprised that Remus had shown up in the dead of night asking about him.

“Sit down and I’ll get us some tea.” She said wearily. She was still half asleep mind you.

“I don’t care about tea. What was it you were saying about Harry to Dumbledore?”

“Don’t you take that tone with me young man. We will have tea and then we will talk about what I saw.” She replied impatiently.

She told Remus all she could remember of her brief encounter of the boy she believed to be Harry. She had forced several cups of tea on the agitated man and watches as he paced around her parlor.

“Are you sure of what you saw Arabella?” It was really Harry wasn’t it?”

“Well it could have been a trick of the light or something else.” She immediately fell silent at the look she was getting.

Arabella knew in her heart that they boy she had seen was Harry. She didn’t know why she had let Albus Dumbledore of all people talk her out of it. The boy looked exactly like the young boy that she had watched whenever the Dursleys wanted to go out. The only difference was that this boy didn’t have the scare or the glasses that she remembered so well.

“You don’t believe that do you? That it was another boy?”

“No, I do believe that it as him Remus. I’ll show you where I ran into him in the morning.”

“We’re going there now Arabella. If that really is Harry, I can’t bare the thought of him on the streets. Believing that he has been dead all these years has been killing me inside.”

-8-

For the last couple of days Remus Lupin could be found in muggle London looking around for a small boy with messy black hair. He believed that Harry was indeed alive and would do anything in his power to find him.

He had been so distraught the last seven years over losing Harry that his work for the Order was suffering. Dumbledore was not happy with his lack of progress with the werewolves. He and Tonks were still seeing each other but Remus didn’t have the courage to ask her to marry him, after all who would want to marry an out of work werewolf?

She had tried very hard to help him get over the loss of Harry but she just didn’t understand. He had lost James, Lily, Sirius and Harry to this stupid war. As each of the people he had cared about had died, it had felt like a part of him had died along with them. He didn’t know how much more he could take.

The only thing that had been on his mind since overhearing Arabella in Dumbeldore’s office was Harry. He planned on taking the boy in and giving him the home he had never had, the Order be damned. While he sat there lost in old memories of a time when James, Lily and Sirius were alive with baby Harry, he missed the object of his search walking across the busy street and into the bakery.

-8-

After his meager breakfast, Harry set out to find more money. He knew he was eventually going to get caught pick-pocketing but he didn’t know what else to do. An officer had stopped him on his way to get his breakfast and asked him where his parents were. The man didn’t seem too convinced when Harry told him that they were in the park. He got as far away from the man as he could, he definitely did

not want to go back into foster care. He had bigger things that he needed to do.

Harry was now getting ready to cross the road when he noticed an older man with graying hair get up off of a bench and head towards one of the alleys between the shops. The man looked a little like Remus Lupin. Harry took off as fast as his small legs could take him to get a better look at the man. As he looked into the alley he got another glimpse of the man. It definitely was Remus but before he could shout out to the man, he had disappeared.

With a dejected look on his face, Harry walked back to the abandoned warehouse he had been staying in. Sitting on the floor, he wondered why he had wanted to call out to the man. He couldn't be sure if Remus would take him to Dumbledore or not. Yet, he couldn't help but think about all of the conversations he and Remus would have, especially about Sirius and his parents.. Remus had been there for Harry after his third year. Harry lay down on his grimy blankets and fell asleep thinking about the last of the true marauders.

-8-

Albus Dumbledore sat in his office at Hogwarts waiting for Remus Lupin to show up for their meeting. Dumbledore had always prided himself with having all the answers for everyone about everything. He was now at a loss. Harry Potter was dead and Voldemort had marked him as the child of the prophecy. He just didn't know what to do. Dumbledore did not fear many things, but he had to admit that at the moment Voldemort was wreaking havoc on the wizarding world. He was at a loss on what to do and was afraid that he would not find a way to stop him.

Remus was supposed to be trying yet again to offer the werewolves help from the light side if they did not want to join Voldemort. Remus had not been the same since Harry had died. The man was not performing as well as he used to for the Order and it had all started when Harry had been sent to Azkaban. It had only gotten worse when the boy had been executed. There was a knock on the door and Remus walked in after he was granted permission to enter.

“You wished to see me Dumbledore?”

“Yes Remus please have a seat.”

Once the man was settled Dumbledore leaned forward in his seat and gave Remus one of his piercing looks.

“I hope you have not been dwelling on what Arabella said Remus. Harry is dead. I saw his body fall after being Kissed and I have the urn with his ashes.”

“I know Dumbledore, but aren't you just a bit curious as to who the boy was? I had to check it out for myself.”

“And did you find the boy?”

“No Dumbledore I didn't.” Remus said while avoiding looking into Dumbledore's eyes. He had seen the boy, he was sure of it.

“I did not think you would Remus. If that boy had been Harry, which I highly doubt for Harry would now be 23 and not a child, I believe he would have asked Arabella to contact me.”

“What was it you wanted to see me for?” Remus asked in a calm voice.

“I would like for you to seek out new allies. Voldemort's numbers are growing by the day and ours have not. People are afraid to oppose him.”

“Where would you like for me to go?” Remus asked in a resigned voice.

“You will leave for France in five days. I will have a Portkey ready for you. Fawkes of course will bring it to you when it is time.”

After the meeting both men were lost in their own thoughts. Dumbledore was wondering when Snape would next be reporting to him. Remus, on the other hand, was anxious to get back to London.

He was sure that he had seen the boy Arabella had described just before he disappeared.

Without realizing it, something called hope was once again appearing in Remus's brown eyes. Making the old man of 40 plus years seems like the youth he once was come forward once again. The wolf in him howling its hope, that its cub...

Was not gone after all...

Chapter 13

Together again...

Remus was eagerly looking around the area he knew he had seen Harry. The young boy had shown up as he was apparating. After walking up and down the road several times, he sat on the bench he had been sitting at earlier in the day.

Several people gave him strange looks. He had not been seen around before and even though this was a large city, he stood out. The passersby only saw a haggard looking man with graying hair in shabby clothes. Most thought he was another homeless individual. They ignored the man and attended to their own business not wanting to be known for associating with someone like the sickly looking man. Remus paid them not attention though.

He would stare at every young boy with dark hair that would pass. It was getting late in the day when he decided to give up for the day. He sighed heavily and got up from the bench. He wanted to find Harry before Dumbledore caught on to what he was doing. As he was preparing to apparate in the alley he heard running footsteps behind him. Remus turned around and felt his mouth fall open in astonishment.

-8-

Harry had been having a very bad couple of days. He had not been able to get any money and he was hungry. Most of the busy people walking to and from work always became suspicious when they saw him and would clutch their purses and wallets closer to them. Many of them had money stolen from them when the boy was around and suspected him. He had almost gotten caught again yesterday. In his haste to escape he had dropped the wallet he had been able to take before the man had known what had happened but another had pointed out that he had taken the mans wallet before Harry could get away. The man had grabbed hold of his arm but Harry was able to wiggle his way out of the grip.

Harry became alert again when he spotted his next victim. He couldn't believe his eyes. It appeared that his Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon were out for dinner. He couldn't help the smile that came to his face when he thought about what their reactions would be if they saw him. Walking up to his aunt and uncle, Harry felt secure in the knowledge that they couldn't punish him this time. He slowly walked behind them to the restaurant as they made their way to an outdoor table.

"Don't worry Petunia, Dudley will be here soon. He's just running a tad behind. You know how boys his age are." His uncle was saying.

"Of course Vernon, I just worry about my precious Duddikins."

Harry had to slap a hand over his mouth to keep from laughing out loud. He didn't know why his aunt had away felt the need to call Dudley pet names. Dudley's friends had always been too afraid of their leader to make fun of the names his mother called him to his face.

The Dursleys were just about to sit when they noticed the little boy standing by them. Harry watched the look of revulsion that was on his Aunt's face as she noticed his grubby appearance. Not wanting to ruin his moment, Harry raised his head to the two adults and smiled.

"Hi Aunt Petunia, Uncle Vernon."

He watched the two in amusement. Vernon Dursley seemed to have lost the ability to speak. Petunia looked as if she were about to faint. After a minute of standing there gaping like a fish out of water, Vernon regained his senses.

"What kind of trick is this? You're supposed to be dead you little freak. You can't be Potter anyway; he was a teenager when he died. What kind of freakishness is this?"

Harry looked at his aunt. She was still staring at Harry with a horrified look on her face. Harry couldn't help but smirk at her and she quickly looked to her husband to get them out of the situation. At that

moment Dudley Dursley showed up holding the hand of a girl that was just as big as he was.

“What’s going on Mum? Who’s this little freak?”

Harry turned to Dudley and nearly laughed out loud again as realization came over his face. He was enjoying this moment very much. He couldn’t help but wonder though if this would somehow get back to the wizarding world. Coming to a quick decision he cast a very powerful, wandless obliviate spell on the four people in front of him and quickly grabbed Vernon’s wallet and gave the man a good kick in the shin before running off.

The Dursleys came out of their trance like state when there was a shout of “That kid just took your wallet.” Dudley wanting to prove himself to his girlfriend ran after the strange looking boy.

Harry hadn’t been expecting Dudley to chase after him. Dudley wasn’t as big as he once was, but he was now in better shape due to his boxing. The bigger boy had no trouble keeping up with Harry. Deciding he needed to cut his losses for the second time in two days, Harry dropped the wallet and turned into the next alley. He nearly ran into the man standing there.

-8-

Remus could not believe his eyes. Standing there in front of him was Harry. It had to be him. The boy seemed to be just as shocked as he was. He took in the boy’s dirty appearance and noticed that he was trying to catch his breath. He took a tentative step towards the boy and knelt down so he could be eye level with him.

“Harry?”

“Remus it was you I saw the other day!”

Remus, always the most cautious of the marauders, voiced a question to the young boy. He wanted desperately for it to be Harry.

“Tell me something only the real Harry would know.”

Harry thought for a moment before he replied

“You gave me lessons to learn about the Patronus Charm in third year. You and Sirius gave me Animagus lessons along with Ron and Hermione. I wasn’t able to discover my form.”

Remus stood there a moment longer and Harry thought that he hadn’t believed him. He was therefore surprised when Remus grabbed him into a bone crushing hug.

“Can we go someplace else Remus? I ran into the Dursleys and took Vernon’s wallet. Dudley was chasing me. I don’t want him to find me. I had to obliviate them so they couldn’t let it slip that they saw me, even if they didn’t believe it.”

Harry felt Remus tighten his arms around him and then the unpleasant feeling of being squeezed through a tube. Needless to say, Harry didn’t like to apparate. When he opened his eyes, he appeared to be in a small cottage. The furniture was much worn, but the place looked and felt comfortable. Remus had disappeared into another room, returning a few minutes later with tea. He motioned for Harry to sit in one of the comfortable looking chairs.

“How is it possible that you are alive Harry? Dumbledore saw you right after you had been Kissed.”

Harry went on to explain that after being away from the Dementors for a while he was able to remember the visit that Remus had made to talk to him about transforming.

“The next thing I know, I was in a park in Surrey. It was the first place I could think of. I decided to change back into my human form and when I did, I was an infant again.”

It took another couple of hours to explain about being able to change his vision, being able to do wandless magic, and how he would practice flying in his phoenix form. He had told Remus that he had been raised in foster homes and then finally running away to live on

the streets.. Remus had been shocked by all of it. He was now talking about different books they could consult and people they could ask.

“Remus, I don’t want Dumbledore to know.”

“Harry we have to tell him eventually. He will need to know. I need to go to France tomorrow, and assignment for the Order.”

“We can tell Dumbledore eventually. I just don’t want him to know yet. Do you think there is a way for me to age into my 23 year old self. I’m supposed to be 24 soon you know.”

“I don’t know Harry. I doubt there is a documented case of this anywhere. I mean you are correct in thinking that transforming into a magical Animagus is impossible. Or at least supposed to be... You should come to France with me. Dumbledore won’t know you are with me. I’ll only be there for a month at the latest.”

“But what will I do while we’re there?”

“We’ll think of something Harry.”

After talking a bit more and having dinner, Harry was very tired and ready for bed. His small body just couldn’t handle being up for long periods of time, especially now that he was full and feeling warm for the first time in a while. Remus showed him to a small room and used a shrinking charm on a pair of his pajamas. After Harry had climbed into the bed Remus had tucked him in.

“Remus, I know I look it, but I’m not a little kid you know.”

Remus apologized before he left the room and Harry felt bad. The man had been nothing but kind to him. He had never had help when he was younger living with the Dursleys and it was still hard for him to accept kindness from adults. The last thought on his mind before falling asleep was that he now had someone he could trust.

-8-

The next morning out of habit, Harry was up early. Remus was not in the sitting room or the small kitchen, so Harry searched the cupboards for something to make for breakfast. It was the least he could do; he had a lot of practice cooking, thanks to his aunt and uncle. He knew Remus had a tough time holding a job down; he was still surprised at how little food the man had. By the time Remus was up and in the kitchen, Harry had made porridge and toast.

They talked through breakfast about Voldemort and what was now in his control. Since Harry's Kiss the Dementors had fled Azkaban to join Voldemort and the Ministry was having trouble covering up the Death Eater attacks from the muggles which were getting worse every day. The giants and most of the werewolves had joined Voldemort. Only the Goblins and Centaurs had remained neutral. Fudge had been voted out of office a few years ago, after the incident with the captured Death Eater and he claiming everything was under control.

The next day, there was a Death Eater attack in Diagon Alley and several people were killed. Needless to say Rufus Scrimgeour had replaced Fudge and he was actually trying to get everything back under control.

Harry wasn't surprised about the giants and werewolves joining Voldemort. He just hoped they would be able to stop them. He didn't want anyone else to be hurt. He and Remus had already discussed getting a wand for him. Remus had said that one could never be too prepared and that having a wand and using wandless magic would be a huge advantage to him. He was sure that they could find a wand for him in France.

"How are the Weaselys and Hermione doing?" He asked out of curiosity.

"They are doing as well as can be expected in times like these. Ron and Hermione are no longer a couple. They haven't been the same since Dumbledore told the Order about your innocence and your death." Remus said quietly as gauged Harry's reactions.

He was the bond that held the two together and after his death, it had all fallen apart. Anyone could see there was still love there. But without Harry...well.

A lot of things went south for Harry's friends and classmates...

Still he could tell Harry wasn't sure how to feel about them anymore. They had turned on him when he needed them the most. Yes, all of the evidence pointed to Harry, but he still couldn't see how they thought he would do something like that. He didn't ask anymore about them. It was just too painful even after seven almost eight years.

Harry and Remus would be leaving for France that evening. Fawkes had delivered the portkey to Remus while Harry had been in the shower. The phoenix tilting its head and giving a little musical sound of delight as it looks to the wolf with hidden knowledge. Somehow Remus knows that the great bird will not spill his and Harry's secret to the Headmaster or anyone else for right now.

It would take them directly to the place they would be staying. They would be staying in Dijon and then Paris. They would have to be very careful though. They were going to use glamour charms. They couldn't take the chance of Harry being recognized, even if he was supposed to be dead. It had been decided that they would act as father and son on vacation.

Harry spent the rest of the day showing some of the wandless magic he had learned to Remus and reading a few of the Defense books that Remus had on his bookshelves. He had also brought up the subject of money and Remus explained to him that Dumbledore had given him enough to cover any expenses. Before Harry had left Hogwarts for the start of his summer holidays at the end of his fifth year, he had given Remus a card that would charge things to his Gringott's account.

Remus had not used it in the nine years that he had it, saying that he would not have felt right about using it. Harry decided that this would be how they would afford clothing, as Harry had ruined all of the clothes he had taken with him when he ran away, and other extra

amenities. The ministry had never checked into his account with the goblin run bank and Remus assured him that the goblins wouldn't go to the ministry about funds being withdrawn from the account. The Ministry could not touch the account without being granted permission from the goblins.

It was finally time for the portkey to take them to their destination, a small villa in Dijon. Harry realized it was sad that this would be the first long trip he had ever taken besides going to Hogwarts.

Chapter 14

Pain

While Remus and a 7 year old Harry were well on their way to France via Portkey. Hermione Granger was currently at home of her day off clutching what few pictures she had managed to save with her magic of happier times.

When everything had happened all those years ago she had been so sure. So sure that her friend, her best and truest friend had betrayed her and the Weaselys to join Voldemort and kill all that didn't agree with him. In fact she was quite bitter about it for the year after he had been found guilty; because she was so sure her senses had been wrong.

And that she had been betrayed along with everyone else.

She had even bonded closer with Ron, the youngest male Weasely and their other best friend. It was to the point they fell in love as they lamented about the cruelty of how they were deceived, how they were tricked, because all evidence and even Harry's own words were truth against him enough.

But to hear and find out that Harry was innocent.

That Harry had been framed by Voldemort...

That a different potions master, other then Snape, had worked and invented a fake truth serum.

What had she done?

What had they all done?

That was when the fights between her and Ron had started. Huge ones, ones that were over every little thing, even Hedwig whom had chosen to stay with her had fled to go with Hagrid instead because of the intensity of the fights between her and Ron.

They were never physical for either one of them.

But they were extremely mental.

One thing she most definitely would give Ron Weasley credit for. He may be a little slow on the uptake, but he was a quick learner where it counted.

And he learned how to use her own barbs against her.

Too many bitter things had been said in those last six months they had been together. To many that although she and he both wanted to get back together, as they generated far too much chemistry now between themselves to be forgotten. Words that they had spewed at each other kept them apart.

Looking at a well worn and cried over picture, she finds her mind wandering where that happiness, that hope for the future gone.

But she already knew the answer before she could say it.

It had died with a black haired, green eyed boy who had given them a reason for living. Who had helped give a Weasley a chance to make himself known and a bookworm to come out of her shell.

Harry was their glue, and without him, their friendship and their bonds simply faded away.

-8-

In the ministry a red headed and very lonely Percy Weasley had wondered if it was too late for him to crawl back home and beg for his family's forgiveness. He had been so sure that the government was right. That Fudge had it all in hand and that prophecy or not Harry Potter was just some upstart kid that had taken a spot that should not have been available in his family's home.

It wasn't until after his death that the now 25 going on 26 year old man would come to realize how much Harry had kept things at bay for not only himself but for others as he lived.

Because with him around Voldemort had been blind to the others...

Like Penelope Clearwater... his fiancée...

Penelope was one of the one of the ones the Death Eaters had killed in Diagon Alley only days after the arrest of one of their own. Fudge as well as he had firmly ignored the man's testimony under truth serum of what he had invented and of those spies in the Ministry.

Dumbledore can't be right and can't be saying that Fudge had done the unthinkable to the only one who could have saved them.

Saved her...

All things changed though when she died. Percy began to look at the Ministry in a new light and well...

He now did not like what he see and did not like what he felt as he looked at himself getting ready every day to work there from his small home.

His home...

Why?

Why did she have to die?

In the end, Percy had no answer. So when Fudge came to him, demanding that he Fairweather as the blundering idiot called him all the time find some way to fix this mess. Percy had promptly gotten up and said words that to this day are still bandied about the ministry offices...

"Fudge help your damn self, I quit!"

He was stunned as only days later, Rufus Scrimgeour had heard what the youth had said and knowing of the reputation, the old and former auror had then taken the red head under his wing.

It seems the old coot respected a former lackey when he stands up to his corrupt boss.

In his own gruff way, the new Minister had helped to heal Percy and had specifically asked the young man to help him in finding ways to stop Voldemort.

It was only through the combined efforts of Percy's knowledge and Rufus's power that has managed to keep Voldemort at bay for so long in the more populated areas.

But even they knew they were losing...

They needed a miracle and...they needed it soon.

-8-

This was just a beginning of my part I hope you like it. Toodles!

Chapter 15

Twists of fate...

It goes to figure the fates would love to mess with Harry now as they did then years ago. Arriving in France only just the previous day, he and Remus were well on their way to the Werewolf Pride known simply as La Royaute de la Lune.

Making their way there, as Remus had been given instructions to meet with an informant, who had been making her way through some of the others non-human tribes as he was doing for the werewolves.

She was to guide him to a cabin for his use as well as be the messenger between himself and Dumbledore.

Maybe there was a reason as to apparently why the cup had chosen her to be one of the champions years ago. For as the blonde looks at him in momentary confusion and then shock, Remus catches her as she collapses in a faint.

"Harry I had no idea this would happen. Was not expecting a veela!"

"I did somewhat Remus." The seven year with a 23 year old mentality responded with a wry grin. "If I had thought about it, Beaubaxtons is located in France anyway. I should have remembered that much about Fleur. In the tent when we were checking wands, before the first task, she had mentioned that hers had the core of a veela hair in it. It was one that she had gotten from her grandmother..."

"Well then what shall we do? She is bound to report this to Dumbledore." Remus stated with a calm mind. His arms having picked up the blonde bridal style almost he felt a twinge of pain as if he was betraying someone else...

Shaking it off, he looks to the seven year old Harry, who studies him with eyes far too old for such a young face.

"She won't." Harry said quietly.

“What do you mean...?”

“She owes me for saving her sister.” Harry responded. “Maybe it is best that this happens now rather than later.” The child voice of the light’s only hope responded with thoughtfulness. “We need someone who can move around better than anyone of us can at the moment.”

Understanding his words, Remus and Harry continued on with the unconscious blonde in the Wolf’s arms. Eventually reaching their destination, of what would be a shared cabin between them, Remus sets about tending to the blonde to help her come around.

As Harry begins to search for food to prepare supper...

-8-

It would be about an hour or so as the scent of meat and various vegetables in a stew encouraged the blonde to come around as well.

Her blue eyes opening wide, she sits bolt up right to find a sense of wolf around her which she had expected according to Dumbledore’s instructions. But it was the little boy with him...

The little boy who gave off the exact same magical feel as well as looked exactly like someone she knew almost 10 years ago.

“Harry? I must be dreaming?” Fleur groggily said as she tried to shake images of a pair of green eyes that are extremely hard to forget.

“No, not dreaming Fleur...” A childlike voice told her with wisdom that should not belong, to someone so young. Turning her head towards the sound, she finds the seven year with a bowl of fragrant stew in front of her. Speechless and in shock, she just can’t seem to say anything as all sense seems to leave her.

A playful almost impish nature coming over him, Harry holds the spoon out, filled with the rich and meaty broth.

“Open wide!”

That shook her out of her stupor long enough, for the blonde to send Harry a glare to rival others. But before she could speak, she finds herself silenced immediately with the wave of the youthful hand.

“Before I explain anything Fleur, you must swear upon your magic and the debt that you owe me you will not reveal this secret to anyone in the Order. Especially Dumbledore!”

Giving a reluctant nod, as the debt between them is triggered, a bright blue glow from her wand flows from her to meet and blend with the emerald green of his aura. Her voice released now, Fleur looks up at the blonde with an expression of irritation and maybe annoyance...

“How?”

A small sigh is emitted, but as he gestures for her to eat, Fleur listens. Being the veela and friend to Harry that she was, she did so proudly as one of the few, who despite everything believed in the youth and his innocence.

Veela are inherently magical creatures and within them is a sixth sense of sorts when it comes to magic. Enough of a sense that allows them to see through illusions...

Which is why she had fainted...

By all accounts her longtime friend from the tournament had passed on and yet here was...as a child.

Hearing about the fact that he was a phoenix Animagus though...that set her to thinking...

“Fleur?”

“Oh forgive me Harry?” The French girl said with a soft and lilting accent. “Your Animagus form, I have heard of that happening before. I simply can not think where at the moment. For Remus and the

others were right. It is not possible for one to become a magical creature unless..."

"Unless what?"

"I shall not say anything more Harry until I am sure." The 26 year old woman stated with a thoughtful and hurried nature. "I must go and research this now while it is fresh in my mind. Until then I bid you adieu, I shall com and bring you some more food in a couple of days. Till then I bid adieu and do be careful, Monsieur Lupin."

"What do you mean?"

"You shall see, but Alexandre is someone who does not fool around. He can be worse than Voldemort if he is crossed."

Chapter 16

Wolf

Having left Harry at the cabin in the woods, under the watchful eye of Fleur, Remus had apparated to a local muggle bar that Fleur had stated the wolf leader he was seeking often frequented. Taking her warning into account, Remus had left after having promised Harry, that should anything happen he would leave right away.

Alexandre was indeed a werewolf of a different sort, Remus noticed as the dark haired man made his rounds, in the club among men and women alike. The man exuded a primal grace that made the wolfishness of his own soul sing with pride and with fear. For as Alexandre turned and narrowed a pair of blue eyes on him...

An urge to cower forced Remus to back up. He had thought he was an alpha, for he had as much power as Greyback. But this man...this Alexandre, had immense power that dwarfed his to that it felt like nothing.

"Why are you here Wolfling?"

Feeling a trifle insulted at the name he has been called as that is reserved for the children or newbies in the prides. Remus can't help but let Moony out for a second in response to the man's perceived insult.

He immediately regretted that. Grasping his hand within his own, it was at that moment Remus realized Alexandre was keeping his power leashed. Truly felt now, Remus felt the full effect of this werewolf and whined as the strength crushed his hand, as he could literally feel the bones breaking within it.

"You are from that country, the one where the wolves have grown weak and spineless to the point that they join with humans for protection."

"No I join with no one!"

“Then you are a loner! Meat to be wasted!”

Growling out his challenge to prove him wrong, Remus felt Moony respond with a vengeance. His eyes flashing gold, Remus leaps for Alexandre’s throat and the challenge is accepted. Tossing him outside as if he was nothing, the other patrons simply shrug and turn back to their drinks.

They were used to Alexandre tossing people out after all.

Moments later they are shocked as the sound of a howling wolf echoing in the air. It is not something that happens everyday, and they are further shocked as a growl of anger emits from their friend and companion.

“Stay here... and lock the doors behind me.”

Only the bartender understands and nods his head in compliance. He was one of Alexandre’s pride members and it was he who notified his leader of Remus’s presence. His customers looking at him confusedly, he simply shakes his head as he follows his leader to the doors.

Already he has started to shift and as the bartender closes the special enforced door, the sounds of two animals snarling and ripping at each others flesh has begun.

His customers, afraid now as the rabid sound only increases, he plies them with even more whiskey, wine, beer, any kind of drink they asked for to drown it out. He gave them...

Still as the yips and snarls grew louder and went on for quite some time. He began to wonder about this silver wolf. But when they stopped all of a sudden...

He wondered who won.

Hesitating, he would simply wait until the signal was given by Alexandre to unlock the doors.

Unknowingly to the bartender, it would be quite a while before that would happen.

-8-

Outside in the woods around the bar, Alexandre and Remus were in what you would call a stalemate. Despite his overwhelming power over the other, the leader of La Royaute found himself impressed as against all odds. This man had not given up, in the fact that he had to fight to not only get his dignity back.

But that he might have figured out this was the dark haired man's way of testing him.

Testing his own power...

Ready to keep going Alexandre growls as others have come. He lets out a commanding howl, and some shy away now with their tails tucked down between their legs. One does not listen and although as old as Alexandre he was impetuous and thinking his leader weak attacks from behind.

Alexandre growls in rage... at the audacity this wolf had to interfere in his own battle. Whipping around his jaws snap immediately around his opponents neck and bites down hard, with relative ease not only does he snap the interlopers neck with one bite. He tosses him like he was nothing deep and far into the woods.

Despite his wolfish nature accepting it Remus watched in horror, as this was done from the safety given to him by the Wolf's mind.

This is why Fleur had warned him.

Alexandre does not hesitate to kill those who intrude on what he perceives as his and he gains power from it.

For it is well known among all magical creatures born or made...

The blood carries the magic... And with death it transfers to the one who drinks it.

For the sheer amount of power that Alexandre exudes...

He had to have killed many.

Chapter 17

Legend

While Remus is dealing with what could only be called a true wolf in all senses of the word. Harry is working alongside Fleur to not only find out why he can transform into a magical creature such as the Phoenix. But why he has de-aged to the point that he was a 23 year old man trapped in a 7 year old body.

At the moment, Harry was showing her specifically what kind of Phoenix he was in a transformation. Although all Phoenixes looked alike in color and beauty, there were subtle differences in their feathers as well as their songs.

It was the only way to tell them apart.

Fleur figured that maybe if they discovered what kind of phoenix he turned into. It would narrow it down to where she had heard the story from. As Harry moved his body with relative ease now, the blonde's eyes widened to near saucer like proportions as what could only be an elegant bird stood in front of her.

Different even for the most exotic of phoenixes, Harry's plumage was unlike any she had ever seen. Scarlet red as was common with most, his feathers were tipped with greens as well as black and gold. As the Phoenix ruffled its feathers in embarrassment, that could only belong to her friend, who hates the limelight.

Fleur takes in the deadly claws and the sharpness of the beak.

Nodding her head a signal for him to transform back, Harry returned to his seven year old state...with an expression of utter annoyance.

"Harry?"

"I was just wondering why I can't just transform into my real age."

"That is a good point Harry. Are you sure you haven't tried?"

Harry gave her a pointed expression.

“So have tried, and you did return to normal?”

“Yes. Remus believes it is because of the Phoenix aspect of my Animagus transformation. Since Phoenixes age naturally after each of their rebirths, he theorizes that unless someone invents a permanent re-aging potion. Before I am even 10 again Voldemort will more then likely have won the battle and the war.”

Nodding her head completely in agreement with his words, Fleur was admittedly thoughtful at the implications. Still she knew that according to the legend that had just her as she thinks about this, she has a feeling Harry will return to normal.

But...only if certain circumstances were met...

“Harry tell me what do you know about the legends of Nimue?”

“Nimue?”

Smiling indulgently, Fleur begins to speak...

You already know about the legends of Merlin Oui? Good. What most people do not realize and attribute to Morgan le Fay often is that it was not she who entrapped the great wizard turned sorcerer.

But a fae witch named Nimue. It is she who actually entrapped Merlin in another dimension. She you see was a selfish fae who wanted his magic for her own. So she had set about seducing him. First as a brilliant bird then as a woman.

She never intended to fall in love.

To save him from the great battles between Arthur and Mordred that she knew was to come. Arthur had supposedly betrayed Merlin enough times at this point that she knew he was more susceptible. More open to suggestion...

She appeared to him once again as a great bird and began to dance as she resumed her human shape. Her songs had lulled him into a deep trance like sleep. In the end, this allowed her to trap him in a place where only she could let him out.

“What does that have to do with me being a Phoenix?”

“Harry, the bird she could turn into as legends tell us was a Phoenix.” Fleur replied with a gentle smile. “But that is not the end of the story.”

“How so?”

“You see there was another way for Merlin to escape.”

“Which is?”

“He had to be desperately needed by those who have forsaken him to return to normal.”

-8-

Hogwarts, the musings of a bird

Fawkes looks at his troubled bond mate with something akin to pity in his bright eyes. The Phoenix knew that his long time friend had felt so sure of that incident long ago, with the young one that he had allowed things to happen as they may.

He did not listen to his warning trills or to that troubling feeling of emotions deep in his soul that the bird can still feel to this day.

Watching as the old one paces back and forth, Fawkes decides to go out and about in flight to check on the others his young one has influenced deeply with his presence. Still he does not really have to go anywhere as a giant of a mans tumbles into the office ranting about something.

“She’s gone! Dumbledore-sir! She gone and flown the coop!”

“Calm down Hagrid!” Dumbledore said quietly as he places a hand on the blubbering giant’s arm, in reassurance. Giving him a few moments to collect himself, Dumbledore smiled as he took his seat and transfigured one large enough for Hagrid to sit in.

“Now who’s flown the coop?”

“Harry’s owl Dumbledore-sir! Hedwig’s gone!”

Paling, Dumbledore almost seemed sad once more. Ever since Harry’s death the owl had become something of a symbol to the light much like Fawkes had become. But unlike the phoenix she was only a familiar to the boy who lived and hence not only has many wizards wished to see her to offer the snowy bird a treat or something.

Many well wishers who were assassins had tried to kill the owl as well.

For the light to loose Hedwig now...

Would be a devastating blow...

Elsewhere and deep over the North Sea

Winging her way towards France a large white with black markings bird was singing for joy as she finally felt her Master’s call.

Chapter 18

Interest

As things were happening, those who had been spying for Voldemort in the various aspects of business at Hogwarts were reporting to the fact that Hedwig had vanished.

The delight at the fact that somehow she had died was the first thing to have come to mind. He hated the fact that in the years after his death and the ensuing revelation of his being innocent, it had turned the bird into some kind of bloody icon. Several times in the past 2 years he had sent in his loyal death eaters to assassinate the blasted owl.

But the security around her was too tight. And even when it wasn't she was always flying around that great oaf of a former classmate Hagrid. The half-giant was simply too well known to the children as well as the wizards for Voldemort to attack him directly.

So the owl had been a thorn in his side for a long time by simply existing. Still if she had flown the coop as his little spies had reported.

"Malfoy!"

"Yes my Lord?" Replied Draco as he approached. The young man had replaced his father albeit very reluctantly in his ranks. With the subsequent arrest and death of Harry Potter many people had lost hope and done what they needed to do to survive.

Draco never wanted to be a Death Eater. He never wanted to even meet the dark lord. But things have a way of happening when they least suspect.

The death of his father for instance...

His father had died in Azkaban. It was a punishment for failing to keep the potions master out of trouble. The one that had allowed them to keep Harry in Azkaban long enough for that bumbling fool Fudge to have him kissed.

Speaking of the idiot...

Voldemort turned to look at his most recently acquired pet of sorts.

A bumbling old fool of a former minister was shivering far and deep into his little corner away from the vile wizard. He was used often as a way for Voldemort to take his rage out on.

It was fun...

Currently he was naked practically despite the filth he was covered in. And he was shuddering in fear. Voldemort just smiled evilly as he deftly tortured the man body and soul with a simple spell as he spoke to Draco who was cringing in pity.

"The owl has escaped. Spread the word. I want that blasted bird dead at first sight!"

"Yes my Lord." Draco bowed as he turned away. The blonde giving a small sigh of sorrow, it turns to a yelp of extreme pain as Fudge is given a reprieve from Voldemort's cruelty as a crucio hits the blonde hard and fast in the back.

"Don't ever make a sound like that around me is that clear?"

"Yes My Lord..." Draco winced out as he was released from the pain spell. The blonde limping out now, as gracefully as he could opens and closes the doors behind him. Luckily he is caught by a woman whom some would never have expected to join the dark side. But does so willingly out of safety for her family and out of need for vengeance...

"Ginny...thank you."

"Draco, you have to be careful about what you say or do."

"Don't you think I know that?" The blonde snapped as he glared at her and then softened as a contrite feeling immediately overwhelmed him. "Forgive me...it's just..."

"That serving him is getting to you...it's getting to us all Draco." Ginny said softly. Out of those who had attended Hogwarts while Harry was alive, over half had refused to join Voldemort whose power had risen considerably since the youth's death.

Those that did had only done so to protect loved ones and to find a way to survive. Her old boyfriend Dean for example was one such person. He was now in Voldemort's inner circle alongside Draco. In the beginning he had only joined to keep his family safe from the threats the dark wizard was sending to those pure bloods in Hogwarts.

But now?

Unlike the blonde, Dean had fallen for the charming persona that was Voldemort. He had willingly killed his own family that he had sworn to protect when they refused to come and join the dark wizard alongside him.

Nowadays the old Dean was starting to re-emerge once more and what was coming out was frightening. For maybe it was the fact that he remembered killing them that caused him to snap?

Or was it the subsequent deaths he had caused in the name of a madman. Including the death of two of Ginny's brothers. Both Fred and Charlie were dead. Killed when defending the ungrateful Dursleys who had found themselves a target after Harry's death.

Not just by those who hoped that they would breed another Golden child as he was their family. But in hopes that somehow the family that they thought loved him. Would take his place.

It didn't matter anyway. For you see...Dean was like Draco's aunt, Bellatrix now.

He was certifiably insane...

-8-

Okay folks this will be the last for a few days. A girl has got to work. I will try to upload at least once this week, but don't expect anything to be honest til the weekend.

Chapter 19

Wolf History

France...

Since Remus had witnessed the wolf leader of La Royaute de la Lune kill, one of his own, without any problem. What frightens him most about it, as time passes; it is not horror that still fills his soul at the memory of it.

It is acceptance.

The horror is still there mind you, and it still makes him nervous about what he is dealing with. But yet the death does not frighten him anymore, almost as if the wolf was pushing him for letting it go.

"That is because it is..."

Not realizing he had voiced his thoughts out, Remus let out a sheepish look of surprise. Chuckling amusedly at it Alexandre, gives a growl which immediately silences not only Remus but others around them.

"Who made you?"

"I do not know for certain. It happened when I was 6." Remus replied.
"I do have reason to believe that it was Fenrir Greyback."

The wizard almost regretted saying that as Alexandre had him only seconds later pinned high to the wall with a single arm. Other wolves around them growling their rage and hatred of the name whispered, the brown haired former professor finds himself struggling to breathe as this action has caught him off guard.

"That vile wolf still lives!" Alexandre growled out.

Struggling to break his hold upon his neck, Remus can't help but plead to Moony within him to break free. He finds his wolf though

already trying to do just that, but is held back with ease by the immense and angry aura of the Wolf within this man.

“Alexandre...you must allow him to answer after all he can not do that if he can not breathe...”

Whoever that soft feminine voice was, Remus struggles to say thank you as the pressure on his throat immediately lightens up. Turning as he clutches it instinctively to see if it was still there and in one piece, he finds himself staring at an extremely beautiful woman.

Brilliant silver hair and blue eyes much like the man in front of him, the woman approaches and places her arms around him. Leaning back against her out of habit, the woman comforts him...

As a mother would her son...

Realization made, but anger not forgotten Alexandre strides away with several of his pack pride alongside him. Leaving only three others there alone with Remus and the older woman, who stares at him compassionately.

“Please forgive my son...” She said quietly, gesturing for some medicine. “The mention of...that ones name still how you say...? Angers him a bit...”

“What...?” Remus managed to say before he is hushed with a gentle hand by the woman to his lips.

“What did he do?” She replied sadly and with a gentle gaze.

“Yes.”

“We do not like to think of it. But because you are new we shall tell you. Fenrir was once one of us. He turned to humans because he desired power to surpass Alexandre...” She responded as she shivered in pain. “He...he...laced the water in the well of our home...with silver nitrate.”

Paling now as her words hit him, Remus almost actually began to cry alongside her as she kept speaking,”

“Our pride...our pack...was once twice the size it is now. Many born not made...we were happy. But he...he desired power and to that he had to get rid of others...others far stronger than him.”

“We were having a party that weekend to celebrate new additions coming to our pride. So many had drunk from it... including my husband and my son’s pregnant mate.”

Watching as the woman gets up and walks away Remus realizes that as she had spoken she had healed him and not once did he cringe in pain.

“Now you know why we do not speak his name around my son. My son does respect you wolfing. It has been a long time since someone had stood up to him for as long as you did. Many at the sheer size of his aura would have simply surrendered. You did not, he was impressed.”

“Are you sure about that?” Remus couldn’t help but state with a small smile and a hoarse voice. One that is responded to with a soft chuckle and a smile of friendliness...

“You are alive are you not?” She answered from the woods before fading away. Leaving Remus alone...

-8-

U.K

Instinct often plays a large role in the lives of all animals. Two and four legged alike. It is what keeps us on guard, what warns us when something is wrong.

On his way to keep a meeting with his human partner/boss of sorts Voldemort, Fenrir Greyback let out an involuntary shiver. Something he has not done since...since those days with them.

He is lucky in the fact that wolves here in the UK where weak willed and that their alphas did not have the strength that Alexandre did. Here he found his power that he wanted, and the ability to make as many werewolves to join his pride that Alexandre had expressly forbidden any and all.

It was stupid to restrict the joining of others are to change children to replace the ones that were lost. Children were far more malleable to adapting to their new abilities then grown men and women were after all.

Sure a few of them went insane with the rages of the wolf.

It was all right that a few destroyed themselves in the grief of what they had lost.

In the end it was only the strong ones that he wanted in his pride. Ones that did not bow to adversity and simply made the best of what life had to offer them. Ironically most of the children that accepted their new lot in life were wizards and witches.

Which, is one of the things that had brought him to Voldemort...

The dark wizard had promised him that with the aide of his wolves, Fenrir could turn as many as he wanted and he would not bat an eye.

That was an enticing promise that the Wolf would savor every chance he gets.

Still at this moment, that warning shiver flows down his spine was more and the wolf he carries is frightened now. Sniffing the air for any changes in the scent of it, Fenrir is thoughtful. Nothing has changed; no one he does not know, nor fear, approaches him.

Then why has he become afraid?

-8-

A little sneak preview of the next chapter

Ron Weasley was miserable. Actually more than miserable, he downright hated his life. But who could he blame for it...no one but himself.

He had turned on his friend.

He had trusted evidence that was right in front of him, never thinking once of the magic that could change the simplest little thing. He, whom unlike his departed best friend and former girlfriend, he who had grown up knowing what he was all his life never thought of what magic could do...

Hermione had pointed that out many times during their catastrophic fights after the revelation that Harry was innocent.

She had the gall to even blame him for changing her way of thought. Making her take the fact she was a witch for granted...

Chapter 20

Remembrance...

It's been seven years...

Seven long and horrible years for the Wizarding world to live through, thought many of Harry's former friends. Their regrets obvious on their faces some of them could not stand to be in the same room with even a picture of him.

The pain was simply too much...

Whereas others could handle it, there were those that could not.

Ron Weasley was one such person.

You see, Ron Weasley was miserable. Actually more than miserable, he down right hated his life. But who could he blame for it...not his family. Not his teachers or his friends. Not even his ex-girlfriend as much as he would like to. In the end he had no one but himself.

He had turned on his friend. The one person, who had made a difference in his life, made him feel like something other than the youngest of the Weasley brothers. The one who had told him secretly several times that he envies Ron for his loving family.

He abandoned his brother in all but blood...Harry Potter.

He had trusted evidence that was right in front of him, never thinking once of the magic that could change the simplest little thing. He, whom unlike his departed best friend and former girlfriend, who were still so new. So innocent of what true magic wielders can do...

He should have known that sooner or later someone out there was going to find a way around it. A spell or a potion that can circumvent the truth...

Hermione had pointed that out many times during their catastrophic fights after the revelation that Harry was innocent. After he had been kissed for things he did not do. She had ranted about how she should have thought about it. But how like many others of the Wizarding world, she had taken what was there for granted.

Not once did Ron argue against that...

For as much as would love to do that. He realized that she was right. The Wizarding world does take what they can do for granted. That's why their world was as messed up as it was now. They were so steeped in what they already did. They never stopped to think of what they could achieve.

But when he had realized that, he had already lost those that meant so much to him.

It was the anniversary of Fred and Charlie's deaths tomorrow. Many would be mourning the two brothers alongside the Dursleys. The last of Harry's family from his mother's side had been killed not long after the two red heads had fallen.

No great loss to those who truly know how they had treated Harry. But they said nothing to allow that small measure of hope that still remained in the hearts of those who still believed there was good in the world. After all, they had to literally hide the Dursleys in case somehow those three boorish prats could in fact produce another Harry.

What better way then to fake their own deaths with magic.

But it came at the cost of his brothers lives...Charlie saying something that to this day runs through Ron's head from time to time. "Hope is worth dying for."

Only the ministry and the Order knew that the three of them were still alive and hiding deep in London. Considering the hatred Voldemort has for anyone Muggle. The odds of him going into downtown London were quite small and hence it had given the three of them another chance at life.

Not that they deserved it.

Still though he had more heartache coming...for in a couple of weeks it would be the anniversary of when he and Hermione had broken up for good.

And in about a month...the anniversary of when Harry had died.

This was not a good time for Ron. Too many memories that were angry and full of sorrow were hitting him now all at one. No matter how hard he struggled or even tried to remember the good times.

The bad always overwhelmed them.

He found himself often turning to things or even people now to drown his memories in. Lavender Brown for example was one such person. The first girlfriend he ever had and now more of a friend, it was because of her that he had finally lost Hermione.

No...not because of her. But she was partially at fault. It was his own stupidity at getting drunk and angry when he had returned to his and Mione's shared home with her intended to silence her words from their most recent fight in the only way he knows how.

He just really picked the wrong person...and the wrong place to drown them with.

His own home...and the bed he shared with Hermione.

She never forgave him after that night. She just said nothing, gathered her things the next day after sleeping on the couch and left.

To this day, almost two years since their break up he has not gotten rid of the loneliness he still feels when not with her.

You see there was something that Hermione did not know again and the Ron had forgotten. It was another thing he had taken for granted and it had taken Arthur, who was ashamed of how far his youngest

son has fallen to tell him. Since it became clear that he and her were not getting back together.

Once a wizard and witch start living together and who were not family and with a relationship such as the one they had.

They were for all intents and purposes married to one another. The magic made sure of that. And if thwarted, it also made sure to never let you forget it, making you want to get back together, making you want to forgive.

But Ron knows that would never happen now.

The only person that could affect them and help them bond was more as Hermione had said many times was gone.

The only person who could help everyone he once called friend and family get their lives back on track...was Harry Potter.

And he was dead.

"Ron come back to bed...I want to show you something..." Lavender whispered out huskily.

Although his body stirs, the red head's heart was heavy. Faking a lusty response, the once friendly and proud Weasley surrenders to his base desires. If only to drown out his memories in warm and willing flesh...

-8-

Thanking the heaven all mighty that she was a Metamorphagus, Tonks walked toward a known death eater station to meet those one her charge. She was his handler and also his best bet for survival because she could become anyone. No one could accuse them if they went someplace and talked with her after all.

Reaching her destination, Tonks stood outside for a few moments as her features shifted into a plain average woman. One easily forgotten...

Ready she opens it to find herself inside the bar and looks around as if searching for someone.

Seeing two familiar heads of red and blonde the woman approaches them to the left of the red headed young woman.

Shaking her head as thoughts of sorrow concerning the red head's presence hit her. She grabs a stool to listen as Draco Malfoy acknowledges her presence.

Muttering to the bartender about a glass of fire whiskey the auror listens to her charge's idle chatter about things that to most here were not of importance. But to the Ministry and to the Order...

"Did you hear Ginny?" The blonde said loudly to a degree. "Voldemort had a death sentence on that blasted Owl's life. The one that has been a thorn in his side for years..."

Tonks almost dropped her drink.

Voldemort knew about Hedwig's escape already. Means that whoever was spying for him in their camp was high on the ladder.

"Yes I heard. I also know he has a meeting with Greyback later this week as well. Concerning going after not just the owl but also one other thorn in his side..."

That time Tonks took the liquor in one gulp. The other thorn in Voldemort's side was someone she loved very much.

Remus...

Although he was not making any progress among the werewolves, over the years since Harry's death he had only gotten stronger to some degree. There had even come a time when he and Greyback had fought against one another in their wolfen forms a few times in his rush to escape.

But just as the wolf affects the man...

Sometimes the man affects the wolf.

For unlike before where he would often lose.

Remus in some of his most recent attempts to escape had actually won their battles. He simply never finished off Greyback.

Whether he chose to ignore it or not, was the real question but according to a few werewolves whom had chosen to follow their instinct and left Greyback to join the light. If Remus had finished Greyback off it would not be the power mad werewolf that the pride would follow.

It would be Remus...

Somehow she had to warn him to be on guard. Quietly paying for her drink as well as leaving a sizable tip for the bartender, Tonks left the bar...

"Remus be safe until I can get to you..." She said softly. Although she has not seen him in close to five years save a handful of times, the young woman was still well and truly in love with him...

Chapter 21

Old friends

Harry looked over at Remus with a thoughtful expression. Ever since he had returned two days ago, the old werewolf was preoccupied with some new information he had imparted to Harry upon his return.

His adoptive father of sorts was someone who did not take things lightly. The fact that this Alexandre exuded power that was so much more than Greyback's had told the young man despite his problem at the moment. That he had better find some way to get to his real physical age and soon.

That was one of the reasons why Fleur was due to come back with as many books as she could afford to carry. After telling Remus what she had related to him, the werewolf had agreed that research on this Nimue was indeed a path to take into getting Harry back to his proper and true physical age.

"Maybe it was for the best that you came to France with me Harry." The older man replied with a soft paternal smile. About to respond, Remus's eyes widen as a snowy white bird all but dive bombs the young man trapped in a child's body.

Pecking him like mad in disapproval as she hoots angrily, Harry is able to look up as she finally stops into the wise and motherly eyes of his first and true friend.

"Hedwig!"

Hooting her irritation with him for having not called her sooner, the owl flew up high beyond her reach. Although he is not the way he is supposed to be at the moment, she knows that this is her master, and glares at him.

"I'm sorry girl...I had to grow and control my magic again! I would have called you sooner!"

Hooting her disbelief at him, Remus couldn't help but laugh as Harry worked on convincing the snowy bird that he was truly sorry for not having called her sooner. When she finally came down, he waited patiently for his charge to ask something that was starting to dawn on him.

"Not that I mind Hedwig because I did miss you so much. But how...how did you get here?"

Stepping forward, Remus offers a arm out to the white bird who flies almost daintily towards him. Recognizing someone she had flown to before lots of times, over the last several years, Hedwig nuzzles his cheek as Remus rubs her belly feathers lightly.

"That is because you called for her with your magic Harry." Remus chuckled. "She had to come."

Confused to say the least, Remus gestures for him to wait a minute as he transfigures a chair into an owl stand for Hedwig. The owl hooting in pleasure nuzzles Remus and then Harry one last time before flying to it. A bowl of water appearing next to her along with some diced cuts of meat small enough for her to rip into...

Hedwig is happily set as her Master and his friend talk about things that she has already forgotten.

"Let me explain now that Hedwig is settled Harry." Remus said with a kind smile. "Did you miss her? Wish she was here with you?"

Looking a little sheepishly down on the ground, the little boy nodded his head. Remus can't help but smile as despite already being 23 years old, the physical age situation Harry finds himself in at the moment...

Well, needless to say he was having something of a second childhood. Albeit a small one and this made Remus warm inside. Warm at the fact that Harry was allowing him to be a part of it...

"Yeah I did...all the talk of Ron and Hermione...the Order. Everything I owned...was destroyed or taken away from me." The youth murmured

his eyes although set in a young face belay the truth of his age being far older.

“So you wished for something of your past...something that you could hold onto desperately.” Remus quietly stated as he wrapped an arm around the young man trapped in a boy’s body.

Nodding in his head, not really wanting to make a response he leaned into the embrace being offered by his former professor and now surrogate father more then anything.

“She came in response to that wish Harry.” Remus gently said as he eventually separated from the child beside him. To look into the wide and adult green eyes trapped in the body of a little boy. “Your magic, your subconscious desire reached out on that bond you share as wizard and familiar. She came to you on that bond you created with her with your heart.”

Understanding dawning in those eyes, an expression of childlike pleasure emerges in emerald orbs that have seen far too much pain. The owl sensing this flies over and is careful to land on his shoulder. Although heavy at the moment, Harry holds strong against her weight upon his thin shoulders.

Rubbing her feathered cheek against his head, Harry finds himself smiling for joy at the presence of her beside him. The pure and simple look on his face is one so true...so peaceful. That Remus says nothing to ruin their reunion.

Because for the first time since Remus had known Harry... he has seen the dark haired youth give an honest to goodness pain free smile.

-8-

“Father...are we going hunting for Snorlacks again?”

Xeo Lovegood turned with a nod of his head as he looked toward his daughter. His Luna had grown up to be a wise and beautiful young woman in his eyes. Unlike most of the Wizarding world, she

alongside her father were among the very few who believed in Harry's innocence.

It was not because of the fact that they were considered crazy. Running the Quibbler many had thought that and ignored their words. Their warning that Harry was innocent and that they had made a big mistake in sentencing him to something he did not do.

It was not because of the fact that they were under some sort of spell either.

What did he or his daughter have to offer in way of information?

To many they had none.

When in truth they had plenty...

Luna was special for she was a seer. Not many were willing to look beyond her oddities and notice that despite her quirkiness, what the young woman would say had an inherent wisdom to it, which could reach your soul.

Her words wide and innocent in sound could cut you deep and make you think of things one has not thought of in years.

"In about a month Luna Flower..." Xeo stated with a grin. "For the moment to go and tell the editors that I expect their reviews of the articles within the next couple of hours."

Skipping away to do as she is bid, Luna vanishes as Xeo closes the door behind her. Approaching his desk now with a silent and thoughtful look he pulls out a drawer to reach for a singular globe.

One that he and Luna often listen to when times in their world. In their home seem to go bad...

Blessed by Nimue

One shall rise

Protected by the wolver pride

Never a child but an adult first

Allowed to be a child again

And then an adult at last

Hope is the Phoenix that is and isn't

For Darkness shall fall before it

Luna spoke this on the day Harry was kissed and once again repeated it only just this morning. When news of Hedwig's disappearance reached them...

Xeo was no fool...

Hope still lives.

Chapter 22

Feelings

If one was to say that they never made a mistake they wish they hadn't in life. Many in the Wizarding world nowadays would call them not human.

Amelia Bones for example to this day wishes she had spoken out against Fudge during that farce of a trial. Harry had looked so...so weak so lifeless. Death Eaters were proud, were glad of what they had done. Bellatrix LeStrange was a perfect example.

She yelled to the world when she had been caught that first time that she was glad she had killed so many innocents in the name of her Lord. And that she would happily do it again.

Harry was not proud like she was that fateful day...

He was so quiet...so lost.

She should have said something. Instead she let the calls for his sentencing swing her thoughts and she therefore remained quiet and solemn.

"Why didn't I speak up that day?"

"Ma'am?"

Looking up to find a puzzled Tonks looking at her, Amelia chuckles quietly and shakes her head. "Nothing Tonks, I was just going over some old regrets."

Regrets were something they all had. Ever since that day they ignored what they believed with their hearts over what they saw with their eyes. Hermione was right now that she thinks about...

She had been visiting Dumbledore and the Order when the young woman had been fighting with her boyfriend. Many had overheard

and were about to protest over her harsh words... when she had said things that made them all think.

Ron! You and the others are so used to being a wizard that you simply don't think about it!

Those words had made sense. An awful sense that made them all scream with agony deep in their heart and soul. The letter she is looking over is a request for a Portkey to France from the woman herself.

"Why France?"

"Information I have obtained from one of our informants, Voldemort has a contract out for Remus." Tonks said quietly. Her eyes are pleading with her boss. They are ones that hope the older woman understands that she must go...if only to see him one last time.

Giving a small sigh, Amelia is about to say no, because of how much someone of Tonks ability is needed by the Auror force. But that feeling...that same feeling from before all those years ago came back with a vengeance.

This time Amelia Bones was not going to ignore it...

"It will take a few days Dora...I'm going to have to pull a few strings within the ministry."

A bright smile on her features, Amelia resists the urge to laugh as Tonks's hair takes on a vibrant pink color to belay the intensity of her emotions.

Emotions that can only be described as thanks and you are the best is the only thing left of the young woman, who had only seconds after Amelia's voice approved her request. Had vanished to gather her things and make plans. The older woman chuckling, she turned her chair to gaze out the window of her office...

Normally dark and dreary since...well since the death of the one who could save them all. Amelia saw something warm and full of life and light. If only for a second...

She saw a phoenix perched by her windowsill...

As it flies away in a burst of flame, not once does she think about the odd fact, that A she was underground, the windows spelled to look like the weather outside. And B...that the fact that a phoenix other than Fawkes who was bonded...were most definitely NOT known to inhabit areas around London.

All she could see was the hope that the bird offered her...

Going back to her paperwork, if one was to come in now, they would question everything.

The normally stoic woman was humming a song...

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In other places, people were following their instincts much like Amelia and Tonks had done.

For example the surviving Weasley twin George, began playing with ideas for various kinds of sweets that can be used in defense. Ones that years ago he and his brother Fred had decided to approach their silent partner...but with all that had happened.

They had felt that they could not trust him anymore and not only dissolved their partnership. But they destroyed that which allowed him to move...things that to this day George regrets alone.

The twins were the only ones creative enough to destroy the map and the cloak that despite all the good it may have done. It now had such a tainted history that they could no longer bear for it to be around.

To find out that not only was Harry innocent that fateful day. But that he had been set up by one who had ideas much like their own. They

had also thought of maybe working out a fake truth potion for their stores.

What kind of kid wouldn't want that to get out of trouble or something of that nature? It would have been a great prank seller! But after what had happened at the ministry...what had happened with Sirius Black...they had also begun thinking. Would they really want to do that? Would they really want to risk selling something like that to those who would use it for evil?

No...and they never went with the idea. Nor did they think of it again either when their friend was accused. They to fell in line with the majority and turned their backs on the boy who lived. Thinking with him gone no way could the Dark Lord win.

In the end they still lost as family and friends began to die over the years one by one...

Shaking his head to get rid of those pained emotions, George struggled still with the remnants of the once proud invisible cloak that Harry often wore to try and save them all. If not only to duplicate it...but to maybe try and bring it back for it was also his father's.

George owes it to not only himself to restore that which he destroyed. But to the spirit of the youth who once held it...

Unknowing as he worked in his laboratory, the same phoenix that had once visited Amelia also took a look in on the older red head. Giving the hoot of a song, the brilliant shining hope flew away, the song transferred to the lips of another who unknowingly sings it as he works.

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The brilliant Phoenix flies towards one more place. A small smile in its eyes, it looks for another inside a tall castle. One whom she already finds much to her disappointment has not changed in the slightest.

Singing her song, her brother of sorts vanishes from his perch to come and see her at her request.

It was at that moment, when he appears above her, that the phoenix began to shift. Turning into a woman of dark red hair streaked with white, vibrant green eyes from her own features, she offers her arm which is covered in rich scarlet brocade.

Fawkes begins to sing his song, which was his way of communicating with the woman upon whose arm he lands upon.

Enjoying the beauty of the voice that he has as he speaks, she nods her head in response several times. Finally done singing, she responds in kind with her own voice. Low and musical and in language that has not been spoken for many years, she works her own magic inside it. Magic to help the Phoenix continue pushing the old and stubborn one into trusting what he knows in his heart...

That hope lives...

Finally as the great Phoenix flies away, the woman in a blast of fire vanishes without a trace.

Things needed to be done and there was one other who needs her to keep him company from time to time. She had once imprisoned someone in this place long ago...

Finding him in her Phoenix form, a tall gothic looking man turns to smile at her warmly despite the misery in his eyes at the events surrounding his home.

"Nimue...how is everyone? How is my godson?"

"It is small and smoldering but hope still lives Sirius Black...hope still lives."

Chapter 23

Grief

It is said that two people who fit so perfectly together, will think about one another often in life and in death.

It was true for James and Lily Potter when they were alive. For despite what they themselves would tell you. There was not a time where one would not find their eyes drifting to the other.

For Ginny Weasley and Harry Potter it was the same.

Hence Harry found himself looking through some old pictures. Pictures that Remus had taken of happier times, and the youth trapped in a child's body could not help but find his gaze drifting to the pretty red headed girl.

The older man observing this gives a small and sad smile as he hopes that his charge will not ask him about her. Harry would be devastated to find that the girl he had developed feelings for had turned to the dark side...

Still he remembers when they were in school, the soft looks she would give him, when he didn't know it. And the jealous and yet puzzled expression on Harry's face when news of her with someone else would reach him. Somewhat naïve back then, nowadays after what Harry has experienced...

He may be younger in body...

But in age he was far older now.

"I miss them sometimes you know?"

"Who Harry?"

"Ron...Hermione...Ginny...even that pompous git Malfoy." Harry chuckled. "I never thought I would miss fighting with him daily." His hands fondly flowing down the soft feathers of Hedwig, the owl was

moving instinctively towards her master as she knows he needs her presence now.

The presence of one who does not judge...but simply listens, because despite the laughter he voices as his familiar she can sense the pain deep in his heart.

“But that time is in the past isn’t it.” Harry said softly and to himself. So quiet was his voice that if it wasn’t for the fact he was a werewolf, Remus might never have heard it. The older man though wisely said nothing.

After all some things were meant to be worked out on their own...

Watching as Harry’s gaze once again drifted to the past, the older man set about preparing some food for dinner. Reluctant to say anything he remains silent, allowing the young man to sort out his thoughts.

What came forth though an hour later, was a statement he had hoped Harry would not say...or even ask.

“Why? Why did they not believe in me?” The sad and yet vibrant green eyes said with such bitterness in them. That both parts of the man known as Remus Lupin, had forgotten everything, to hug the youth close. “Ron...Hermione...Ginny...they knew me...so why did they not believe in me?”

This was how Fleur would find them a couple of hours later. Remus just rocking the child Harry in his arms, the blonde confused for a moment, could see the tears running down the little boy’s face and she understood.

Silently saying nothing the blonde simply placed the books she had brought on the table and went into the kitchen to finish what the older man had started...

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Not knowing a certain someone was alive and at this moment residing in France, Ginny Weasley found herself escaping the clutches of an over amorous Dean Thomas. Once she might have surrendered if only to forget the betrayal that she had thought she had been forced to endure when Harry had supposedly killed innocent people.

She had been...no not had been. She was and still is so much in love with messy black hair and vibrant green eyes. They belonged to features of a handsome youth in her opinion, one who had needed her and her family as well as so many. One whom in a private moment long ago...

Had spoke sadly of his past and of dreams...

"You know something Ginny. You and Ron are lucky..."

Puzzled and honestly surprised by his statement the young teenager looks at the boy with curious hazel eyes. "What do you mean Harry?"

"You have everything I want."

Extremely confused now, Ginny finds Harry pulling out a picture that she a seen only twice before, but knows full well who the images were. In it was an older version of Harry but with laughing hazel eyes. And the woman beside him in the image was a vibrant red head with the same green eyes as that of her friend and companion.

"You miss them don't you?"

"Can't miss who you don't know..." The boy said sadly and with hints of covered bitterness. "That's why I envy you and Ron and so many others...you know your family...I... don't."

Thoughtful and sad as she studied his longing, his quiet wants of the two people to come back into his life. Ginny simply leaned against him as her arm linked within his.

"You do know your family Harry...you do..." She whispered with a soft and gentle smile. "I remember when Professor Lupin told us, that

when he saw you at first, it was like looking into a mirror of your father. He said that in laughter and the way you move, you reminded him of the past. But when he looked into your eyes...he saw the kind and gentle nature of your mother..."

"Ginny...?"

"What I am trying to say Harry is you do know your family." The young girl said with a warm smile. "Everyday you look in the mirror, you see your father. Everyday you show kindness and warmth to someone...you know your mother. Both of them are in you Harry..."

"Harry..." Ginny whispered sadly. Having arrived at her small home, the young woman had found herself with the one thing she had always meant to destroy, but never could.

Harry's photo album...

Opening the book, to find a mixture of muggle and wizard pictures, she savored at the happier times that someone who she wishes with all her heart was here beside her.

She had a fantasy once...one where the two of them were happily married. Holding their baby in her arms, as he held her in his...

Crying now, Ginny fell back and on her side in anguished pain. Clutching the photo album to her breast, she once again releases her sorrow at his death. Only to have nothing left but the rage she feels deep inside.

Hazel eyes darkening now, she glares at her arm with hatred as it begins to burn. She was so close...so close to joining the inner circle. So close to killing him, for killing off her family and her dreams...

Of all the people in her life at some point, the only person who knew why she joined was Draco Malfoy.

She joined not only to protect her family...but out of vengeance for the loss of two of her brothers. And out of loss for the boy that she loved with all her heart...

“Harry, I wish you were here.”

[illegible]

Sirius found himself looking through the pool of magic that Nimue had finally set up for him. It allowed him to watch what was happening back home to those he loved. He had been angry at how the world had treated his godson.

He had been downright psst, when things that had meant so much to the youth were destroyed simply to punish him.

Yet he was relieved when Nimue had told him not to worry as he was about to be kissed. He was downright celebrating for days despite Harry's odd circumstances when Nimue had revealed she had blessed his mother once. Knowing what was to happen from a long departed and much loved friend of hers.

She had given him her gifts with that blessing upon his mother before Lily was even born. Gifts that would lay dormant until the time was right...

Watching as his godson became a brilliant phoenix now in that pool of magic as he escaped death was invigorating.

But he grew angry and sad as he skimmed over the following years. He could tell by the frustration in Harry's green eyes that he wants so very badly to be back to normal. Only to find he can not...

Turning to the woman who was watching what was happening with interest beside him, he looks at her with a curious question. About to voice it, Nimue looks at him with bright green eyes that she had passed to the mother who in that point had passed them onto her son.

“He will grow Sirius Black...he will. He just has to truly want it with mind, body, heart, and soul.”

For once Sirius without really asking knows what Nimue states is the cure to Harry's age problem. It is something all wizards know, but often forget.

You have to want something badly for it to work...

The only thing keeping Harry from returning back to normal...was Harry himself.

Chapter 24

Wolf Way

Leaving Harry with Fleur in that condition was something that Remus did not really want to do. He had wanted to stay with the young man and be there for him. But as the youth gathered himself while they ate...Harry had insisted he go.

After all Remus needed to gather information on Alexandre in hopes that he will either join Voldemort. (Which Remus is fairly sure he would not do.) Therefore making the Order of the Phoenix's job impossible even with the Ministry...

Or that he will join with them...

Throwing his lot with the Order, enabling them to get some kind of foothold for the light, was something Remus sensed Alexandre could do easily. The man was strong as a human already. The people of the town as he noticed the werewolf looking around treated him with respect and dignity.

Alexandre exuded the same kind of force, the same kind of charming personality that Albus and even Voldemort contained.

It makes Alexandre a formidable foe.

Therefore he had hoped for the latter.

He did expect though what the werewolf had decided to do.

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"Come Remus...you must fight me again!" The werewolf leader said happily as he guided the wizard towards a huge arena where many men and women in human and wolf forms were intermingling with one another. "We never really did finish our battle when we first met..."

“How...how could you think of a fight at a time like this?” Remus asked incredulously, as he was also surprised by the use of his first name. Pausing in mid step, Alexandre turns warm and yet guarded eyes on him. “It is the way of the wolf to forget wolfling. We live in the now of our lives. We do not live in the past as all that does is make us weak. It is our way. Come...fight with me. And learn...”

Somehow he wants to say something, yet this mans words make so much sense, that the Remus can not argue against it. It is something that he has often found easy and to a point something he has done often to move on with his life.

When Harry had ‘died’ he had dived into his work with so much need that he had indeed forgotten. But yet when at work for the Order or at one of his many second hand jobs he always found his eyes drifting towards the place where a boy lived.

A boy whom he had felt he failed...

He was not going to do so again.

Amazingly, and without him realizing it, his aura shot out strongly causing Alexandre to smile.

After speaking with his mother as well as others that have counseled him, this wolf from the island may be the true and rightful leader as he had heard from those who spy for him there. This is the one who has beaten Greyback several times recently...but has never killed him.

He just needs a little push...

Approaching the arena, where many of his pride have already gathered, he leaps at Remus as he already starts to shift.

The fight has begun within the wolf and the man. Who will win?

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As the fight began, someone close to Alexandre and curious about Remus found where the other man was staying. Kind and wise of

nature, Isabelle, mother of Alexandre had found the cabin in the woods. As much as she found Remus interesting she does wish for a repeat of that incident long ago...

Hence she must seek out information herself...

Her two guards always with her as they approach, they sniff the air as it is their job.

But soon it is not needed as the occupants that were within come out. One is a blonde woman, that to the noses of all three, they detect as a Delacourt. Hence dangerous should the other come under any harm. For the other was a little boy. Dark of hair, and small of stature, the wolves would leave them be, thinking it is the family of the one behind.

What stops them though only moments later, is watching the young child shift into a brilliant red bird.

Afraid and fearful at first as it was the way of the wolf to not understand what it could not fathom. It was only instinct that prevented them from warning Alexandre about the possible dangers of the wolf he currently battles.

Instinct in the fact that a song had chirped from the boy now bird. A song that reached the inside of their hearts and warmed them with its light and goodness...

Standing up, both Henri and Jacqueline were prepared to tackle their leader's mother to the ground if need be. Yet their instincts not once rose as Isabelle started forward towards the woman and the bird. Staying where they were, they watched as the bird shifted once again and stood in front of the blonde with a guarded and wary expression, far older then what should be on a child's face.

Bending down to look into his eyes, Harry feels something stirring within him. Her kind eyes warm and gentle, she touches his hair and cheek as the way only a mother could.

"Eyes so old to be in someone so young..."

With those words she murmured, a part of Harry surrenders to the nature within her that calls to him. Fleur knowing who the woman was as she approached did nothing and simply smiled.

Isabelle despite being a werewolf was different and unique. She followed the way so pure and so simple to the point she had lived long and was quite wise in matters of life. Observant to a tee, Fleur knew that of all the people who might help Harry find why he can not return...

Isabelle was the one who could guarantee it.

“What has happened to you young one? Why are you not as you should be?”

Fleur watched as Harry said nothing, but just threw himself into the arms of this older woman. Arms that wrapped around him and sang a soft soothing melody...

When she finishes, she pulls away and Fleur is happy. Because despite knowing how old her dear friend truly is, Harry has an almost childlike innocent in his eyes now. One that smiles at the older woman with something akin to adoration...

“How...”

“Your song called to me young one...” Isabelle smiled gently.

“My song?”

“When a phoenix sings little one, it sings of light of hope normally. But it can also sing of pain, sadness, and of longing.” The woman replied as she kissed his forehead as only a mother should. “What mother would not respond to the pain of a child crying out like that?”

Somehow deep in his heart, he could hear his long departed mother smiling in approval of what this woman tells him.

“Thank you...”

Smiling the woman takes his hand within her own. "You are most welcome cubling...now tell me of your life."

Despite the fact that not once she has asked him his name, Harry does not know nor does he care. There is something about her, which screams she is true... Turning to look at Fleur, the veela is already creating Isabelle and her guards who have come out of hiding to join them.

Unbeknownst to them, others watched...and smiled.

Ashes of hope that were once smoldering...were now beginning to burn. The protector has come.

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Some of you berated me about the second prophecy. It is a firm belief of mine that once Harry was kissed, that the first one no longer came into play. It did say one or the other must die at the hands of each other after all.

Not all prophecies are meant to be taken literal.

Because as some of you know...the second one I created spoke of a wolf and many of you assumed it to be Remus. Not once if you look back did I mention it was him, for there are other forms of protection besides fighting.

Sometimes simply just being there is the greatest protection one can give.

Chapter 25

Acceptance

Harry found himself talking with the werewolf woman Isabelle, mother of Alexandre alongside Fleur for hours. She had done something that had made Harry feel warm and loved inside so much that he was actually like a little kid around her.

She had simply accepted him as Harry.

No last name, no nickname either passed her lips. To her he was just Harry. It was something that made the youth feel free.

Idly enough and much to Harry's embarrassment, Fleur couldn't help but take a picture of him with her wand. It was a picture that years later, the blonde as well as many others of his friends and family would never let down. It was a picture of him acting like a typical 7 year old...when he was 23 trapped in a child's body.

What was he doing?

Lying on the floor doodling like any child would that late at night. It was something he had never done on his own or even voluntarily when he was a child before. And yet with Isabelle, all he wanted to do was be that child he never could be. In a way...

Harry was having the childhood he had never gotten before.

As he was showing her one of the more recent drawings he had finished, it was at that moment, that Remus as well as Alexandre and Henri came through the door. The Wolf leader looking puzzled for a moment, at the events surrounding his mother and the little boy on the floor. He watches as Remus receives an earlier drawing that Harry had completed with her aide.

Somehow the Wolf leader knows that despite the fact this boy is human...he may have just found himself a little brother, knowing his mother.

“Alexandre...Monsieur Lupin...” Isabelle stated with a smile as she stood up to greet them. “I hope you do not mind. But young Harry called to me.”

Both men puzzled at first, it is Alexandre who accepts it without question. Whirling down on the child in front of him, Harry finds himself swooped onto this dark haired man’s shoulders. Remus watching this is about to comment against this when he notices Harry’s eyes.

A light that he once had long ago...long before all this had ever started with his parents deaths...

It was dim at the moment, but it was there. Harry was getting back something that he had been taken from him long ago...his innocence.

“Come with me Monsieur Lupin...” Isabelle stated softly as she linked her arms within his own. “Come let Harry have some memories that he was denied ever experiencing before.”

“Call me Remus...” The brown haired man replied. Although battered and bruised, Remus smiled as he saw something that had not been seen in close to a dozen years. “How...”

“The way Remus Lupin...” Isabelle replied as they stepped outside, Remus turning to take a look to find Harry being tickled by the dangerous werewolf who had once again taken on a playful exterior with ease. Far different from the deadly man and creature that he truly was.. “You know of what I speak now I hope.”

“I understand it...but I...”

“How I shall put it then, Harry has told me of his life until now Monsieur Lupin. A life where he was expected to be something and not allowed to be what he wanted.” The woman answered with a kind and gentle gaze.

“All he had to do was tell us...”

“He has wanted to many a time Remus. But yet there is one thing that is a part of him that he can not let go. Nor does he wish to for it gives him his strength and his courage...”

“What is this that?”

“His honor...” Isabelle replied with a kind smile. “He is much like how my Alexandre was when he was that age. When the event happened that I spoke to you about, Alexandre wanted so desperately to go after Greyback who had fled. But he did not...our people needed him. Needed him to help them heal and to gain strength again.”

Somehow, Remus understands what Isabelle is telling him and he starts to feel guilty for he to has placed part of his burden upon the youth.

“You may be partially responsible Lupin, but he does not blame you. He loves you very much with all his heart. Unlike many before, you believed in him. You were the quiet voice that got through and not the many screaming at him for something he did not want or do. For you see...you accepted him as it is the way.”

Realization now dawns upon him and now a slow understanding hits him as to why Harry had turned to him so many times and not Sirius or Dumbledore before that night.

It was because like Isabelle had stated, wolves listen and accept what has happened. They do not judge, they do not hate.

They simply accept what is said or done and move on.

Sometimes all a person needs to heal is to feel that sense of acceptance. That sense that someone is listening and nothing more. Nothing less...

“You have done more then I could do in a lifetime this one night...” Remus whispered.

“I have done nothing that had not already been begun by you Remus. But sometimes, I can tell you this much...sometimes life needs a

woman's touch." Isabelle chuckled merrily. "Now come, let us go back us inside, I do believe my son and our shared cub Harry will probably be demolishing your little cabin by now oui?"

Hearing now the laughter alongside the occasional crash and Fleur's yelling to be careful. Remus ran inside and narrowed his gaze on an older man and little boy who both had guilty looks on their faces. Looks that made Remus want to just join in the disaster at first because as much as he hated to admit it.

At that moment he was reminded of an event himself from the past. It was one where he had walked into their shared dorm room when he was younger and found James Potter and Sirius Black giving him those same looks Harry and Alexandre were giving him now.

The look of 'he started it' as their entire room was demolished in their playful fight.

Instead of yelling at the guilty looking man and youth, Remus found himself laughing. Laughing as he hadn't done for real in almost 24 years.

Harry seeing his adoptive father of sorts like this found himself joining in moments later as had Alexandre and the others.

All this time, despite the damage done to this cabin in her family's land, Fleur notices something about Harry. Something that the youth may not realize until much later...

That in these past few moments, clothes that had fit him perfectly despite being made for a child, were now a few inches too short?

Putting off what she saw as to seeing things that weren't there, Fleur smiles and joins in the laughing never noticing the quiet celebration going on elsewhere by those who watch.

For it is often in playfulness, when a child sees someone they respect and wish to emulate with all their want and desire, that they grow and in more ways than one.

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Harry grew...he does not realize it at the moment guys and gals. But he allowed himself to grow because he wanted to! So instead of trapped in the body of a seven thing more like an 8-9 year old.

Chapter 26

Awareness

It is those little oddities in life that makes us notice change. After Alexandre and Isabelle had left that night it would not be until the next morning, when Harry and Remus would realize that the youth had grown.

Especially when despite the fact all his clothes still fit him only the previous morning. They were now a couple inches to short in their fit. But of course it took going through half a dozen outfits that morning before they realized it.

"You grew Harry...it may have been only a couple of inches. But you grew..." Remus stated with a surprised and happy smile on his face. Harry just looked at himself in awe as Remus hurriedly cast a spell on the clothes he had on to fit him better.

"But how...how did I grow Remus?"

Thoughtful and silent for a few moments, the two look at one another with a puzzled expression on their features. It is Remus though who offers a theory. One that although hard pressed to believe on Harry's part is one he can not argue.

"The only thing I can think of Harry is that you wanted to grow."

"I have wanted to for the last seven years Remus..."

"That's not what I am saying Harry." The wolf chuckled amusedly. "It is so elementary I think I have forgotten about it."

"About what?"

Bending down to look at Harry, Remus stares at bright green eyes. That same light from last night was a little bigger. Almost like a candle flicker now, it made Remus content knowing that what he believed now to be Harry's problem was truth.

“Magic Harry, remember your lessons from Hogwarts? What is the first thing about magic that you learned when it comes to its uses?”

Silent as he looks back, Harry’s eyes widen and stare at Remus when it happens. “We have to want the magic to work for it to do so. But Remus! I have wanted it to work I have wanted to grow.”

Quiet, Remus takes a chair to look at Harry sadly. “Harry did you hear what you just said?”

“Remus?”

“You said you wanted to grow.”

“I don’t get it...”

“Wanted Harry! Wanted to grow...not wanting to grow. Wanted...”

Finally as the words sink into the youth Harry’s magic reacts wildly as if to deny what he was saying. Almost as if by instinct Remus grasps onto the youth and simply holds on tight. The werewolf inside him exuding its calming power upon the upset child it perceives as its cubling, it takes about 10 to 15 minutes for Harry to calm down.

The Animagus magic inside him reacting to the presence of one who seeks only to help him.

“That can’t be right Remus,” The youth said softly. “It just can’t be...I can’t be doing this...to myself.”

“It is possible Harry; magic is as much of the heart, the soul, the body, and the mind as much as it is of nature itself.” The wolf stated quietly as he let the youth go. Bending down to look him square in the eye, he cups both cheeks in his hands, as the youth looks at him in confusion. “With all that has happened to you Harry, there could be things bugging you, making a part of you wish to stay as you were.”

Thoughtful at Remus’s words, Harry finds he is unable to argue at all. For despite the impossibility of it, what Remus was saying makes sense.

“So last night...”

“Last night I saw something Harry, I saw something with Alexandre and Isabelle there that made me smile. Your eyes Harry, were so happy, so innocent you were like the child I once knew before long ago.”

“Before my parents were killed...”

“Right...” Remus responded. “You let yourself go Harry. You have spent so much of your life guarding yourself and others up until this point. Never have you let yourself go. Never have you let your magic flow naturally to your will...”

“And last night, I did...” Harry said with a smile. “I felt free Remus...wrestling with Alexandre reminded me so much of Padfoot...”

“For me as well.” Remus stated proudly. Part of him still bruised and battered from his match with Alexandre, the older man couldn’t help but remember happier times with his youthful childhood friend. He had felt so free, so alive, that he had fought and played to his hardest against the man.

And although they had fought to a standstill, what was left of their clothes more on then off, Remus couldn’t help but smile and laugh out loud with Alexandre’s comment.

Talk about a stress reliever...

Almost all the wolves who had been watching grew silent at that remark. Remus on the other hand was the only one who had fallen to the floor in amusement and much to the delight of others, so did their leader.

Somehow everything was starting change. For despite all occurrences, it has been many years since the pride has heard their Alexandre laugh again.

From that moment on the two men had begun talking once they calmed down enough to speak. Their voices quiet and thoughtful, they had talked of the events of the past and the present. Things that were brought up, as they spoke, were pushed away and forgotten...

The way was making itself manifest at the time when both needed it.

Soon although they remembered their horrible pasts, they both found themselves accepting it and moving on. Their hearts although fragile were healing...

That moment as both finished getting ready Fleur had come. Looking as the blonde veela entered the small cabin. Harry can't help but share the news that he had grown. The blonde remembering that she had thought he had last night wisely says nothing in response to his happiness.

He deserves to be able to tell someone good news rather than bad after all. She sighs sadly. Harry has had so much pain, since she met him that year during the tournament. She is glad to be able to help him and call him her friend.

"I am glad for you Harry, but I wonder... what else is bothering you?"

-8-

It is said that sometimes, when we think something is destroyed it is not. Although Albus has often used his fireplace since that night he had learned of Harry's death. He has not really had it cleaned in many years.

Having it done now, he does not notice something that catches the eyes of Dobby the house elf. A small scrap of paper, one that had escaped the fires many times by floating up as it burned to get stuck in a small crevice. One that shines brilliant green reminiscent of life...

Somehow Dobby knows this paper is related to his beloved Harry Potter as it reads of a connection to an aura, that his own inner nature could read. It was at the moment he was about to show Dumbledore, that Fakes trilled a song.

Although pretty it was a voice of warning to Dobby.

The little being listening as the phoenix spoke in his song; he nods his head in response to what he was being told. Placing the small scrap of paper within his small towel to hide it from sight, he turns back to the chimney to continue his work...

Harry had found himself another ally.

But all the time as this was happening those who watch cry out in joy, and in pain.

“So...Alexandre is he...”

“Going to replace you Sirius Black?” Nimue asked curiously. “I do not know. Fate does not allow me to see much nor does it pick and choose. You are here where I once imprisoned Merlin long ago...it was only through fate that he was released to help establish the beginnings of your Wizarding world.” She cried softly in remembrance. “It was then that fate had him simply move on.”

“What do you mean?”

“Unlike myself Sirius Black, who is immortal and can not age you can. Time is stopped here for you... if you were to step out now. You would age...and the longer the time that you are here...”

“The closer I would be to dying...”

“Yes...I saw it happen with my beloved Merlin. Although he used his magic to prolong his life as long as he could. He grew so old within the space of a few months...he simply went to sleep looking like he was 60 and died at the age of 700, the next morning. His immense magic simply could not stop it forever.”

“And my magic I know is no where near his legends...and you can't let me out, because it was not you who put me in here.”

“Yes...and for that I am sorry that I can not help you my friend.”
Nimue replied with a gentle smile. “It is simply up to fate. You may have gotten here by destiny Sirius Black, but it is your choice of what comes of it. Find a way out and soon if you can. You are missed and you are needed.”

Chapter 27

Playing

Books teach us to read, numbers teach us to add, pencils teach us to write. Those are the basics of school in any age or grade. But what is it that teaches us about life?

It is simply our childhood.

Isabelle looked at Harry, who was in a wrestling match once again with Alexandre, who was rolling with the youth like a cub once again with herself and Fleur watching. But this time her son and newfound cub had dragged Remus into it with them, and she couldn't help but smile in joy.

Not since that day has so much laughter been released in her home. Never has she felt more alive and in the moment.

Watching as Harry escapes, there is a playful grin as he tries to evade one more. This time though he was accidentally yanked hard and onto the floor. Banging his knee rather loudly, the youth yelped in pain.

About to shout out to be careful, Fleur was startled as Isabelle held her back.

"Isabelle?"

"Do not interfere, Fleur." The woman said with a gentle smile.

"But..."

"Watch..."

Turning back to the youth, who was looking irritated at the panicked gaze of Remus asking him if he was all right. Despite his small size, Harry launched himself with a mixture of laughter and vengeance at the culprit of the incident. Tackled by the now 9 year old version of

Harry Potter to the ground, Remus is surprised but then returns to wrestling and tickling the youth who was laughing even more now.

Alexandre giving a small whine of being left out of the fun finds himself immediately dragged back in by both the young boy and his fellow wolf.

Fleur startled by this as she is concerned about what injuries done by a wolf, regardless of whether or not intentional, could do to Harry. Isabelle look at her with a gaze, that speaks volumes.

"Harry has told me of his childhood Fleur. No real friends...no one to play with, no one to teach him to fight back on his own with anything else other than words. Even then his words were often curtailed."

"I don't understand..."

"Fleur, it is simply play..."

"Play?"

Giggling softly, Isabelle stares at the young blonde woman with a kindness that Fleur feels warm her heart. "I forget, although you are Veela, you are more human than not. It is the way of the werewolf as well as the Veela to allow children to wrestle and to play for it is not only enjoyment. But it so that the cub can learn to defend him or herself..." Isabelle intoned. "Harry was a cubling once before as he is now. But from what he told me his fellow pride members were not good for him. Every time he would win he would be struck down, for doing simply what was in his nature."

"Fighting back..."

"Yes, it is not just in our wolf nature, but the truth can be said about veela and humans can it not?"

Thinking back to her friends and to her family all through out her life, what the older woman says simply makes sense. It would explain so much of despite how well he did in the tournament; Harry seemed weaker at fighting in magic and non-magical ways. He was practically

a beginner in it compared to her sister Gabrielle who although younger, had better control and mastery of spells and abilities that most other wizards had no trouble with. But Harry did...

"Poor Harry..."

"Do not let him hear you say that Fleur." Isabelle said quietly. "Do not give him your pity."

"Isabelle."

"Fleur, all his life he was bullied by those who hated him, or coerced by those who wanted him to something. When they found out his childhood he was pitied, he was babied." Isabelle stated with a passion of a mother in anger. "He knew that was wrong and tried to tell them he was all right. But, he was not allowed to grow strong."

Turning to her friend whose features now resembled those he had during the tournament to a degree. He was battered and a little bruised, but unlike that fateful year when she had met him, he was smiling. It is when Isabelle again, that her words sink in and Fleur finally understands...

"Call this training for what is to come if you must. But do not pity him. He is learning to fight his own way now. He is learning to use his instinct; he is learning to be strong. So do not pity him. Instead help him...help him grow strong. Allow us to train his body, and with your help we can train his mind as well."

Startled as Isabelle had offered her something she was contemplating doing anyway. Fleur looked at the older woman, who just smiled indulgently. "Harry is a wizard, of which I know. But as much as I believe Remus wishes to teach him, he has things he must learn as an alpha from my son. He can not teach Harry and learn the Way at the same time. You I know were one Harry spoke of to me fondly from past. I believe he would be willing to learn what he does not know from you. Who knows? Perhaps in the process he will grow again?"

Finding herself agreeing to what the older woman intoned, Isabelle calls those whom she affectionately now calls her cublings to her. Remus and Alexandre both looking a little put out by that nickname as they were not children by any means, Harry just looked at Isabelle and sank into her embrace as she offered him a gentle hug as she took the time to clean dirt out of a few scratches upon his face.

If one was to look now on the five people inside the home, one would think that was a simple and perfect...family.

Over the next week of training and much to the delight of all those involved at this moment in Harry's life...

Harry would grow again, within the week he would change from a 9 year old...to that of a 14 year old boy.

Alexandre in his training of Remus would step strength training for not just the older man, but the youth as well. Teaching him to grown in his body and spirit, Harry unlike his first childhood, would be physically fit and healthy for a youth his age. Where he was only 5'4 foot in the beginning because of how he was treated by the Dursleys in that life. Thanks to the housekeeper and fellow Werewolf Helena who when it came to food was exactly like Molly Weasley, he was healthy and strong at 5'7.

His body instead of slim was lean and showing hints now of the muscles that were developing with the encouragement of Alexandre and Remus.

At first it was thought his body would remain identical when it started to grow again as it had in the past. But as his body started to change, Fleur who had started to teach him magic that he had missed in his final year of schooling had come up with a theory that was plausible.

Harry, I believe your body changing from before simply because you are being treated with love and respect. Your body is changing with what you are doing to show what could have been if your family had treated you right...

Somehow, Harry found himself agreeing...

Still though, as he trained alongside Remus and was taught by Fleur and on occasion Remus, who filled him on something that neither he nor she could understand fully. They were all unaware of what or she would say who was coming...

For back home in the Wizarding world, a Portkey was being set up for a woman who needed desperately to protect the wolf that she loved.

Tonks was on her way...

Chapter 28

Arrival 1

For the first two-three weeks Harry had been reunited with Remus and had found himself a family with the wolven pride in France, he was genuinely happy. And on top of that he now fully agreed with Fleur and Remus in their theories on why he was growing.

He feels no pressure to do chores. He feels no pressure to be perfect! The only pressure upon him is to simply be himself...not to be the Golden Boy. He was only allowed to be Harry.

That was something that for the longest time...he could only dream of. Everytime he ever attempted to be himself, it was always taken away from him. Because of duty...reaching up to scratch Hedwig's feathers, the owl hooted softly as she nuzzled his cheek.

He had wanted to show Isabelle the snowy owl and had brought Hedwig with them today as he, Remus, and Fleur went to visit her and Alexandre in their home.

It was at that moment, lost in thought that Alexandre had come and smiled at Harry with a quiet almost brotherly gaze. Although it has only been a week since he was a little boy easily caught, as he grew he had become stronger and more confident than the boy he had met that first day. And in such a short time...maybe not all humans are that bad. Sometimes they need help to...

"Ready to fly?"

Distracted thoroughly now, as Harry stared back with a puzzled expression, it is Hedwig who understood and hooted her pleasure, while she launched herself into the air. Her eyes turning to her Master she playfully swooped down on him in flight, giving a cool breeze against his skin in the night air.

"This is a good night for a run..." Alexandre mused as he looked at Harry with an expression of delight. It was at that moment several

wolves howled into the night air and he grinned, fangs already starting to emerge from the gums of his teeth.

“Change Harry...become your other form...and fly free with us...!”

Running off into the woods, he leaps into the air and it is only seconds later that a brilliant wolf stands with a fangy grin upon its features. Howling at the night sky, he lopes off into the forest where Harry sees others wolves of all shapes and sizes joining their leader.

“Alexandre is right you know Harry...you should go with them.”

Coming up from behind, Remus takes the seat where Alexandre had once stood. Cradling a mug of hot chocolate in his hand, to distract from the chill in the night air, the older man stared at Harry with warm paternal brown eyes. “You should...”

“Remus?”

The werewolf just smiled and gave the gentle youth a shove out and towards the woods. “Go Harry...trust me. You will enjoy it.”

“Okay...but aren’t you coming?”

“No.” Remus replied with a wry grin. “Despite what Alexandre has helped me to accomplish with Moony, some old habits are hard to break.”

Taking a moment to listen, Harry understands what the older man is telling him. Remus has learnt much about the misconception perceived by his so called condition. The fact that Alexandre can change at will as can many of his pride is something that was hard to fathom.

He had always believed they could only change while the moon was full. But it seems not only was that false, but that if they could be allowed to change more then that, the wolf inside could get used to the human half. Become like a pet. Rather then a caged beast.

If he had known this so long ago...he might have been more capable of so many things that had been denied him. Remus was disappointed in what much of the ministry has denied him and others by way of knowledge. No wonder Greyback has held on for so long as pride leader back home.

Without knowledge, there can be no growth.

So leaving his former professor and adoptive father to his thoughts, Harry runs for the wolves and as he does so begins to shift. Like Alexandre has been teaching Remus control, so has he been working with Harry despite the fact he was not a true shifter.

Animagus magic and that which makes men and women shifters were actually quite similar in many aspects ironically. For a Were of any kind to shift, it requires concentration and the mindset to do so, to connect with your beast. Much like an Animagus must do so when trying to learn his or her form.

Once done, it all became a matter of will power and of course the ability to ignore the first pangs of transforming until it becomes second nature.

Although he is not quite at the level Alexandre was at, it the ability to change parts of his body at will. Harry found that the ease at which he shift to his phoenix form was astounding.

He and his phoenix self were truly bonded...

Now leaping into the air as Alexandre had done, in a flash of scarlet light, the brilliant bird that was Harry flew straight and true, to fly and play alongside Hedwig as the wolves of La Royaute savored the night air.

It was truly freedom...

[illegible]

Having arrived in France the day before, Tonks had stayed in a hotel long enough to get her stuff together for the trek to the Delacourt lands. Dumbledore had given her a letter to give the French family as proof of who she was and that she had come to aide Remus in whatever he was doing.

With the loss of Hedwig recently, Remus had recently become more or less the focus of morale and hope for the light. Without his really even knowing it, these last couple of weeks...

He was best friends with the Potters. He was best friends with Sirius Black...and above all he was the teacher and the one man who taught Harry quite a bit of what he knows.

Despite the honesty of all that, Tonks knows that Remus would be appalled at how the world was going to try and turn to him to fix everything.

Like they once did Harry...

Never really truly having gotten to know the youth, what she had seen Tonks had admittedly liked. He had kind eyes and a gentle almost serene nature about him that seemed almost unreal. Maybe that was why she believed so readily as did other members of the order in his guilt.

There was a saying amongst muggles. If something seems too good to be true. It probably is.

Harry was so good, so kind... it all had to be fake right?

They were all wrong. Harry was indeed like that. He could not have done what he did. All this time Harry had been innocent and they had thought the worst.

Trying to shake free of here thoughts, Tonks now notices from her quiet musings that she had somehow arrived at her destination.

Preparing to make her presence known, the young woman did what she must and pressed a few buttons to gain their attention. Waiting

for about twenty minutes, she is rewarded as a young blonde woman approaches. Unlike her elder sister golden appearance, Gabrielle Delacourt's hair was whiter almost like snow. Against her tanned skin and crystal blue eyes, she was indeed a beautiful young woman.

Tonks immediately felt inadequate in her presence, but she forced herself to remember that this woman was also part Veela. Hence she had no reason to feel inferior in the slightest, handing over her letter; the young woman opened it and read with curiosity and clarity of mind.

"You wish to see Monsieur Lupin?"

"Yes..." Tonks stated vehemently. "I must!"

A small smile crossing her lips, Gabrielle gestured for her to follow. The young woman herself has been curious as of late, as Fleur had been asking her for many of their old schoolbooks to take with her. Not to mention she has been staying there as of late longer and longer.

Just what was her elder sister doing?

Maybe by taking this woman to the cabin, she will be able to finally find out what was going on.

Chatting amicably, the two women talked about various things and even then, when Gabrielle had asked why Fleur would be asking for old schoolbooks as of late to take to Remus. Tonks could only think that maybe the other woman was asking Remus to teach her something.

But to both that simply did not make sense and so Tonks was admittedly stumped as to what exactly what her wolf was doing here.

Eventually arriving at their destination, both women became puzzled and for the same reason.

No one was at the cabin...

"I am sure Monsieur Lupin stepped out." Gabrielle said with a soft and gentle smile. She had noticed the look of worry and hopes that her kind words would reassure the other woman.

"Yes...do you think it would be all right if I waited here?"

"I see no problem with that." The pale blonde replied. "I will wait with you. Because who knows. He may be gone for ten minutes or even three hours. It is best that I take you back and give you room in our home to stay till he returns then if he does not show up yes?"

Nodding her head, Tonks looked out towards the surrounding woods. Hearing the sound of wolves baying at the moon in the distance and all around, she shivered subconsciously in fear.

"Please be all right Remus..."

Chapter 29

Song

Interlude

Flying free alongside Hedwig, Harry found himself savoring the wind underneath his wings. At the tips little sparks of fire emerged in his pleasure, without his really knowing it. Hence the youth provided a beacon of sorts in the woods as the wolves romped and played underneath him.

Landing upon a branch above a clearing, where the wolves were tumbling against one another in play. The larger ones watching the little cubs growling and pouncing on one another, Harry is not aware that he has begun humming a song. He is so wrapped in his pleasurable humming, that he does not notice, Hedwig perching beside him.

As her feathers glow a bright snowy white, in reaction to his magic, Hedwig's ability as Harry's familiar had come into play in such a way as to become unforgettable. Despite being in Phoenix form, his magic was freely responding to his song, and Harry's direct happiness.

Hedwig was shining like the moon itself. The wolves young and old had stopped their playing to not only stare at her but to revel in the warmth she exhaled from Harry's magic. It's call so warm, so loving. That the wolf and human side in each shifter responded happily to that peace...

Unknowingly though, the song traveled in the woods, its pure noted warm and inviting to dance in its song, it only grew as it traveled.

People stopped to listen and cry for joy...

Animals stopped fighting to play...

When it reaches Remus, the wolf found himself smiling as memories of friends and family long gone enveloped him. Although he misses

them dearly, he finds that it does not hurt as much as it used to anymore.

Run...play with others now? Moony asked Remus from inside him. The wolf spirit seems to be quiet and respectful as it to remember friends long gone. Yet it grins almost happily, when its instinct is reward by a shy and yet enthusiastic response...

...yes...

Dropping everything, Remus is out the door faster then the eyes can blink. Running towards the sound and scent of others like him, the older wizard bends forward as the light envelops him. Moments later a pure silver wolf runs to join the rest of its pride...

His tail wagging the wolf that is Moony/Remus yelps in surprise and annoyance as its friend Blackfell/Alexandre tackles him in playfulness. Wrestling one another in a pseudo battle for dominance the two wolves are shortly joined by others in play.

It was nice not to care...not to be on guard...it was nice to be free.

-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-

Isabelle who had watched Remus leave looked to Fleur who smiled. The song had reached them as well.

"His powers have grown..." Fleur commented warmly as she closes her eyes to the feel of the tune within her.

"Yes." Isabelle replied with a gentle smile. "That is what pure joy can do. It can make what you already have expanded to phenomenal proportions..."

-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-

I am still working on Part 2...but I did this for all of you so the wait wouldn't feel so long...I hope you like it. Considering my birthday is Wednesday...I figured I would share the joy...

Chapter 30

Arrival 2

Harry was gliding playfully in Phoenix form above Remus's head alongside Hedwig. Although he should return to his human half, much like Sirius who had embraced his doggy half with glee. Harry had welcomed the warm light hearted creature that was his.

Affectionately calling the bird Merlin, as the name had come from nowhere special, he felt it described the aspect of the Phoenix within him. Strong...wise... and gentle...

"Harry you ever going to turn human tonight? Remus said with a chuckle, as his response was simply an indignant musical note from his adopted godson.

"Leave him be Remus!" Alexandre stated in amusement. Having come along to escort them back to their cabin, and then the Delacourt mansion for Fleur, the enigmatic chief of the pride grinned as Harry landed on his shoulders to nuzzle his cheek. "He deserves it his song was wonderful!"

"Indeed it was...Harry...how...how did you do that?" Remus worded softly to the phoenix that has a sheepish and clueless expression on its feathers.

"BAH! Who cares how...he just did that's all that matters!" Alexandre grinned as he threw the bird into the air with a casual lift of his shoulder. "And I sincerely hope next time he does it again!"

Despite wanting to protest that there must be a reason why his song reached as far as it did. Remus found he was agreeing as Harry launched himself once more into the air at Hedwig's playful hoot. They had spent at least three to four hours playing with the pride and Harry while still mentally being 23 his body wasn't.

Already despite his excitement he could see the feathers slowly losing their glisten with tiredness.

“Oh...you have guests?” Chirped the black haired man as they had finally arrived at the cabin...

Startled by the idle comment, he notices Tonks from behind the bushes and pales considerably. Whispering a few choice words under his breath, he looks to Fleur who is indeed panicked as well. So much progress has been made with returning Harry to normal...

“Alexandre do me a favor?”

“?”

“Take Harry and Hedwig back with you.” Remus replied quietly as he moved out into sight along with Fleur. “Keep them with you until I find out what is going on...”

“Why mon ami?”

“Harry’s past has come calling.” The brown haired man responded. “keep him with you until Fleur or myself comes for him.

Understanding perfectly now, Alexandre disappears back into the woods. Harry having been held up in a playful game of tag with his familiar was puzzled as the wolf had gestured for him to come down. Remaining in his bird form, he perched upon his shoulders, and looked at the dark haired man with bright green eyes...

Saying nothing, it is Blackfell, Alexandre’s wolf who lets out a quiet growl from the older man. After all when a shifter speaks most listen, for it is often their instinct that can override reason for the sake of one’s life.

“Cub stay with pride...alpha brother warns... you and friend follow.”

Turning to look as he immediately worries about Remus, Harry struggles to fight the instinct of the Phoenix. But his Animagus magic responds more to the form he is in, that finds it obeying the Werewolf leader.

Giving a sound of irritation as Alexandre steps further away from the cabin, Harry lets out a mournful tone of worry.

“Be safe...”

-8-

Approaching the cabin with Fleur, Remus finds himself being tackled by a woman whom he admittedly has missed with all his heart. But for the first time, wishes she had not come. Harry does not need the past now to come calling...he was simply not ready!

And to be honest neither was he...

Although he still loves Tonks with all his heart. What happened in the Order that year...that night. Still hits his soul with a heavy pang. Only with Alexandre and Isabelle's help has he recently been able to let go according to their way. To fully embrace Moony who has been with him and sharing his emotions all this time.

Still old habits are hard to break...

“What are you doing here Dora?” The wolf smiled wryly. The younger woman still crying with relief at the sight of his form standing there does not notice his stiff expression or the arms that wrap around her in confusion and maybe a little reluctance...

“You're alive...”

“Of course I am...” Remus states in puzzlement. Trying to comfort her, he notices how Gabrielle who was watching with eyes that seems to notice his reluctance be distracted by her sister. The two Veela women talking to one another, Fleur pales in understanding of why the other woman was here.

“Remus...she has come to warn you...” Fleur said quietly as she hands him the letter from Dumbledore. “It seems you are next on Voldemort's hit list as well as Harry's owl.”

“I always expected to be on it sooner or later...but why Hedwig?”

"It is because with you two out of the way, the light will have nothing to give them hope." Tonks whispered quietly against his chest. "You never knew, but the public often flocked to Hogwarts to see Harry's owl. She had become something of a symbol of hope to them. Recently she has vanished though..."

Doing his best to not sound as if he knew where Harry or Hedwig was, Remus hoped he sounded surprised enough to convince her. After all lying was never his strong point...

Finding Tonks looking up at him doubtfully, Remus struggled for something to say but was saved by Gabrielle, who was curious.

"Did owl fly away?"

"We don't know Gabrielle...Hedwig just up and disappeared. And with her gone, people recently have started to rally around Remus. After all he is the last living tie to the Potter family. Being James and Lily's friend as well as Harry's teacher, the public is starting to want to see more of him...want him to do more in the fight against Voldemort."

Paling considerably, Remus almost chokes on the position that Harry once held. A position that the youth had repeatedly not wanted...

"I can't..."

"I know Remus, that's why I came. It is one of many reasons Voldemort, had ordered you to be killed on sight. According to our spy, you are also proving to be a thorn in his side among the dark creatures."

"I've heard..."

"You have?"

Nodding his head, he explained about the progress he has made with La Royaute. The pride leader Alexandre accepting him into his family of sorts, Remus also spoke of the injustice the ministry had done with the shifters in their control.

“Did he tell you about the fact that many wolves look to you as their leader now?”

“Yes and no...” Remus said with quiet resignation. “I can’t do what I need to do to take control of the wolves away from him.”

“Why not!”

“Tonks, to shifters for one to take over a pride of any kind, one has to kill the old leader and...” Fleur said quietly and with understanding. Isabelle when she had explained it to not just herself, but also Harry the two had almost gotten ill from the thought of it. But they also understood it was the way to submit their power of leadership to the instinct of the pride.

So she wonders...will this Tonks understand as well?

“And what?”

“Devour his heart...” Remus said quietly. “It would explain why I had this sudden urge to rip into his chest, when I was trying to escape, the last time.” The brown haired man stated with an emotionless chuckle. One that brought shivers to the spines of those who listened.

“Surely...surely there’s another way.”

“There isn’t...” Fleur said quietly as she held on to Gabrielle. Her younger sister was green as she had pictured this kind man from all appearances doing something...so vile. “If Remus had killed Greyback outright it would not have to be done. But because he has let him live so many times, those under Greyback’s power...their beasts will not accept anything less than that, according to Alexandre.”

“My god...” The woman whispered as not only her hair, but her skin turned a sickly shade of green. Watching as the woman runs for something for which to throw up, Fleur approaches with a sad smile on her features. Words Isabelle had told them flowing through their mind now in even more of a painful clarity...

To be a magical creature is to understand, that sometimes we have to do things that respond to the beasts inside all of us. Even if it goes against all our human nature, it is the only way we as a whole can survive...

For if we do not...we can go insane...

Chapter 31

Discovery

Instinct is that feeling, that sense that warns us when something is about to go wrong to ourselves or to someone we love.

It is our own body's way of trying to give us a heads up to protect ourselves...

Some would say pain was another form of instinct.

Whether we want it to be or not

Harry found himself transforming into his teenage self once more, as he arrives at the home of Alexandre and Isabelle. A look demanding an explanation on his features, he finds it swiftly disarmed as a disapproving glare is emitted from blue eyes rimmed with gold as Alexandre answers...

"Remus asked me to..."

Enough said as he strides away it is at the moment, that Isabelle comes. A look of disappointment on her features as Harry tries to exert himself... It still turns into a small smile as he whispers something that causes her son to stop.

Before, according to Remus, he would have held his tongue...now he speaks from the heart.

"Sorry... It's just I'm just worried about him... He's my family."

A gentle look overcomes the werewolf leader at this moment, turning back to the youth; Alexandre just gives him a heartfelt hug. One so much like his mother's to Harry that he greedily drinks of the contact.

"Then tell me Cub...is it not a family's job to try and protect one of their own?" Alexandre asked with a kind growling voice that signifies Blackfell speaking as well. "And do you not consider me and my mother as well as the pride family?"

"I...I don't know. The only real family I ever knew was the Weasley's and..."

"And they what?" Alexandre said quietly. Remus and himself had been talking recently at Harry's development. Things, issues he had with the past needed to be addressed for him to fully let go, before he is able to heal and confront it again with a clear mind. And according to what the wizard wolf had stated, once it comes to be prepared.

Because there were a lot of repressed emotions for since Remus has found him...

The youth had always avoided the issue of his past to a degree that yes he would wonder. But would never ask... Issues that once truly confronted will bring anger...pain...regret.

"They what Harry..." Alexandre repeated again. The kindness in his eyes as he growls low in reassurance was brotherly and loving. It was so he can soften the memories that were fighting to return to a mind that doesn't want them back.

An intense aura began to swirl and Isabelle rushed to help her son contain it. The magic once locked up moves to explode with a vibrant powerful blast. Strengthening her son, through their bond, Alexandre's wolf moves to suppress as much power as it could.

"They left me in there! They knew what dementors did to me!" Harry screamed. "Why! Why didn't they believe in me! Why did they believe I could kill someone! They were supposed to be my family!"

At the moment as Harry's power swirled to the point it had become visible, it burst wide open from the youth. Alexandre and his mother took down and suppressed all that they could from being discovered and found out, amongst those who would kill this young man they had come to care for with all their heart.

Power still whirled around them. Bright and visible like lighting it threatened to overwhelm them with power and sheer amount of it.

Eventually with the aide of other wolves who had come to lend their strength, they pushed it down...swallowed it for better terminology.

After it was done many were surprised.

Before where it was happiness that allowed him to grow, this time it was pain. It only makes sense to be honest, as a now 20-22 year old version of the youth emerged.

One can not have true peace without a little heartache...

To not have a little bit of pain in ones life was simply not possible.

Catching him in mid fall, Alexandre caught the youth whom he had grown attached to before he could hit the floor hard. Already Isabelle had yanked a cloak from the closet and was wrapping it around the young man in her son's arms. The older woman growling softly, she finds the youth responding to her voice as he opens green eyes that she has come to adore.

"Mum?" Harry weakly responded as he stared at the older woman. Who smiled warmly and said nothing to disillusion him. The power her cubling had released was enough to knock anyone out if they contained that much restraint. That much anguish in their hearts...

Watching as his eyes glazes over in pain, it is at that moment regardless of his request that Alexandre sends for Remus. Because as Harry begins to tremble, a connection once thought gone from not only the youth, had once again opened. One that causes him to collapse with realization of what he must do now...

As Remus had feared that past has indeed come calling. And this time it won't be denied.

-8-

Elsewhere and in the UK

Soundly confident and in a meeting with his inner circle, Voldemort peruses his best with an almost insane smile of pleasure. Discussing

the latest plan to destroy the ministry and the order, he pauses as racking pain this him in his head.

Falling back as power that he has not felt for a long time swells up and over with such intensity that he almost screams in pain.

Put instead he bears it in hatred and anger.

“THAT BRAT’S ALIVE!”

“My Lord?”

Blasting a Crucio at half a dozen death eaters in his range, Draco pulls Ginny away just in time to allow another to get hit. The others managing to take cover, the two younger ones watch as Snape and Bellatrix manage to calm him down if barely. It had helped that Bella’s husband had gathered Voldemort’s little torture victim Fudge to distract him.

At this moment as the former minister was suffering undo tortures. Voldemort was beginning to calm. His red eyes pulsing with power he turns and glares at all of them. Never knowing that shortly the Order will make a search for said person as another is called back to help...

“That brat...that Potter is still alive!”

A mixture of disbelief and hatred fills many a death eater’s heart. But to three of them, there is something akin to hope.

Despite his dislike of the youth, Severus Snape had to admit that apparently not only was life better for many when Voldemort was focused on him. The world...his home was peaceful and more orderly.

Nowadays...it has become a nightmare.

People were fearful. People were wary...more easily swayed to whoever could protect them. It is how over half of Voldemort’s army had come to be. They had been so afraid of what the Dark Lord would do to them and their families that they joined to keep them safe.

To give them back their hero now? Could prove fatal to the Dark Lord's plans.

"My Lord forgive me for asking...but are you sure?"

Standing straight despite the pain of the curse now aimed at him, Voldemort snarls in anger. "YES I'M SURE!"

"But how my Lord?" Bellatrix cooed. "We made sure and Draco's daddy confirmed as well as several others in your inner circle that Potter's body was burned after he had been kissed, by orders of your toy over there. There is nothing left of him."

"He survived a killing curse what do you expect." Dean replied sarcastically. Earning the wrath of his mentor, he just laughed as she tried to claw his face in retaliation. "So somehow he must have found a way out!"

Laughing as Bella's husband forcibly restrained her from attacking, Voldemort was most calm as he finally spoke once more.

"I don't care how he made it out or even when. Know this I know Potter's magic signature. Having the connection between us allows us to know one another's handiwork. What I felt was most definitely an alive and very much kicking Potter. I want him found and I want him DEAD!"

That's aid many of his best followers scattered, Snape was off to report his finding to Dumbledore, as Draco pulled Ginny into another room. The two of them looking at one another, so many thoughts and questions passed in the single look they shared between them.

For Draco the thoughts of competing once again with his old rival were almost thrilling, He had only really felt alive when around the youth who in the beginning was the bane of his existence but as time passed and whether or not either youth would admit it.

They had formed a different friendship of sorts...

One of friendly rivalry...

But for Ginny her heart pounded with despair.

If Harry was indeed alive and had escaped death somehow...why had he not come to save them?

The answer was simply this...why should he when those who were supposed to believe in him. Failed...

Chapter 32

Desperate Hope

Some would say that night played a pivotal role in the lives of many. Some would breathe a sigh of relief at the chance that maybe there was hope after all. Others would cry in pain...

For much like Ginny, they thought if their savior was truly alive...why had he not come?

Currently speaking with Dumbledore as he had rushed straight to Hogwarts after the meeting, the old wizard just sat in his chair as he seemed to almost visibly get younger, with each word spoken. When he was finally done, blue eyes that had not seen a twinkle in a long time had returned and Snape was almost ready to dance for joy.

Not that he would...because realization also struck him at something else. Something he did not wish to think about.

"Harry's...alive?"

"Voldemort made a valid point Albus, because of the connection between them both, if anyone would know it would be him." Snape replied quietly. "They had been connected nearly all of Harry's life and tonight was the first time it had flared up since his death."

Taking this in, Dumbledore immediately started summoning the Order to come right away. But the old man was stopped as a reluctant Severus said something that chilled him to the bone in despair.

"Albus before you do that. Ask yourself...if he was alive why has he not come?"

Stiffening the wizard pales as those words sink in. He pales in the fact that his long time friend and one he sees as a son is right in his question. Why...why hasn't Harry come forward?

“You... make a point Severus.” Albus said quietly. “But the others have a right to know, if Voldemort is going after Harry, maybe we could...”

“Could what Albus? Harry has stayed hidden if he is indeed alive for 7 years! What will us making a frantic search of everywhere do? But draw attention to the fact that Voldemort will not only know that Harry’s alive, but that he can simply tail us to find him!”

Grasping his wand as if he desires to hex this man, Albus releases a slow sound of desperate hope.

“Then what do we do Severus? We need Harry back to fight Voldemort.”

Shaking his head sadly, Severus just looked at a man whom a long time ago had held his respect. But since those days when the boy was supposedly kissed, well that respect has more or less become pity.

“As much as I hate to aide that brat, Albus did you just hear what you said?”

Confused by Severus’s statement, the potions professor gazes at his former mentor with eyes filled with sadness. Fawkes who had been listening forlornly gives a soft trill of disappointment as well. Much like the Slytherin head, the phoenix knows that Albus has gone for the lack of a better word.

Desperate...desperate for times that have gone and that he wants back so much. That it seems he was willing to overlook the fact that maybe the young man would see that. And would forever hate someone he once saw as a grandfather...

“I don’t understand...”

“You said we need Harry to fight Voldemort.”

Having his own words repeated, Albus is about to comment when what Severus refers to dawns on him. Sinking back into his chair, the

potions master gazes at him with pity... He speaks some words that forced Dumbledore to think as Snape takes his leave. His job for right now done...

He does not like Potter, still believing the youth to be arrogant and willful like his father. But over the years he had taken a look at what his life had been like in his memories. And realized with much regret that Harry was not the child he had accused him of... He was not pampered or seeking any kind of attention.

His relatives would not have so readily accused him of murder if they truly spoiled him as they all had thought. He like most of the order had fallen into the same trap which was why his own words echoed in his own mind as they did over and over in Albus's.

"Maybe that was the reason why you and others were so foolish to believe what happened all those years ago, so easily Albus despite evidence. You were so busy wanting him to fight Voldemort, to be a hero. Did you ever once ask him...if he wanted to or better yet ask yourself this... Was he even ready to?"

-8-

Elsewhere and all over the UK

Although neither man spoke to another that night, as each thought on what they should do, word spread via the death eaters all over the country. All of it concerning the possibility that one Harry James Potter was still alive.

People began to hope again but soon for some their hopes were held in doubt. For much like Ginny had thought, if he was indeed alive...why had he not come to save them?

It all came down to a matter of trust...

When word finally reached the ears of one Ronald Weasley two days later as he walked down the street he broke down and cried his sorrow and regret. If Harry was indeed alive, how would his former

best friend...someone whom he knew had seen Ron and himself as brothers judge him?

Brothers do not do what Ron did to Harry.

His own brothers might still be alive if he had trusted more with his heart that day as instinct had warned him. But the evidence was so great so damning...

Dragging himself to a bench, the tall man just put his head between his legs to keep from collapsing in sadness and agony any further. It was then at the moment a soft and familiar voice approached...

"I see that you heard as well..." Hermione said quietly. His own hazel eyes looking into her sad brown ones he could see, that she herself was frazzled and in pain over the news.

"He trusted us 'Mione... We were practically brothers..."

"And I was his best friend..." The young woman choked out as she struggled not to cry. "And we failed him..."

Sitting beside him now on that bench, Ron finds himself in a long forgotten state of peace, that he could only get from her. His head resting in her lap as she clutched his hand within her own. The two drew strength from one another once more as they did so many years ago, through a bond that Harry had helped them forge...

"We need to find him..." Ron said quietly. His voice sad and broken, there was also a tiny measure of needful hope.

"I know and I want to find him to Ron...if he's alive. I need to find him." Hermione whispered. "But what if he doesn't want to be found? I mean if he's been alive all this time, what if..." She continued uncertainly, her brown eyes broken and sad...there is so much she wants to be forgiven for from their friend. But the smarts that he had often praised her for is what failed her that day...

She had ignored her instinct... Ignored what her own senses were telling her. Ever since then, when they found out...she has not trusted her own ideas or opinions as much as she used to.

"I don't know 'Mione... I just know I need to find him as well. If only to say two words to him..." Ron replied as he sat up and looked at her. His own eyes troubled and needing what only their long gone friend could give. "I need to tell him...I need to tell him I'm sorry."

Looking up at him, Hermione finds herself giving a small smile as she nods her head in agreement. Because as she stares into Ron's eyes, she sees something that hasn't been there for a long time, not since that day they found out...

She sees strength and the Ron she fell in love with.

Maybe there is such a thing as hope...

As he stands up to offer her hand, Hermione Granger for the first time in years, finds herself taking it. After all...they had a friend to find and one they hoped will forgive.

"Where shall we start looking?"

"Remus..." Ron stated with conviction. "Remus was the one who believed in Harry when we did not...if there is anyone Harry would turn to...it would be him."

-8-

Whistles...

Oh dear...

Chapter 33

Contact

Two days earlier

Trying to convince a stubborn metamorphagus that he was fine, despite knowing what he must do, Remus stilled as the howls of a wolf reached his ears in warning. His body whirling around, as Hedwig comes flying through a window in a panicked state. Hooting her fear, the werewolf knows that his cubling is in pain.

“What the...Hedwig!” Tonks exclaimed in surprise. The auror staring at the owl that’s mere life had helped all of them so much in retaining a measure of peace these dark days. That she doesn’t think at first about the owl’s presence beside Remus.

But when it does sink in mere seconds later, she grasps onto his arm with a steely grip of determination. One that even Moony deep within finds himself impressed with the strength of that hand upon his arm.

Wincing in pain, as he knows that feeling from other times before, Remus pauses to look at Fleur with a pleading expression.

“I can not say Remus...” The blonde replied quietly. “My oath of secrecy, do you not remember?”

“Tonks...”

“What is going on Remus...why is Hedwig here and with you?!”

Looking at her sadly, Remus wrenches his arm free, using the supernatural strength of the werewolf. Tonks stunned by this move just stands there for a moment in surprise. Never before had he been assertive like this when confronted. In fact Remus was not known for it. Preferring to avoid conflict if he could...

Odd considering he was a defense teacher...

But that was Remus.

"I have to go Tonks...there is someone out there...who means the world to me..." Remus said quietly. "Someone who needs me at this moment to help..." With that comment, the younger woman is left standing as the wizard races out to follow Hedwig who had taken to the air and who leads the way.

Tonks almost in tears at this looks to Fleur pleadingly...a desperate look in her eyes as her appearance takes on a sad sorry beggar in reaction to her emotions.

"I am sorry Tonks...I can't my magic won't let me." The blonde replied sadly. "All I can tell you is that it is for a good reason he leaves."

Hearing the forlorn howls of the wolf again, Tonks shivers instinctively in fear. They were so close, that despite Remus's words that the Wolf Pride around was very good and kind, she held on to her wand with a tight fist.

"I'm going after him..."

Fleur is about to protest this when Tonks looks at her. That same desperation in her eyes, she finds that she can not say anything against it. Giving a small sound as her sister lets her own curiosity be known at this time, she wonders if Harry and Remus will forgive her for what is about to be done.

"Fine...I will take you. But you must promise me upon your magic, that what you see and what you hear will not be spoken of or written..." The Veela woman said quietly. "And my sister can vouch...as Veela we take our promises very seriously. We will know if it is broken..."

Reluctantly agreeing to this oath, despite her better judgment, Tonks raises her wand to swear upon her magic. After spoken something akin to a bond forms between them and the blonde woman lets out a sound of satisfaction...

Once Gabrielle has repeated it with her own magic...something arises within them all as Fleur takes charge. Tonks admittedly bristling a

little bit, at the proximity and audacity credits it to the anger and rejection from Remus and events that seem to be spinning out of her control.

After all she may be a Tonks, but she is proud to also call herself a member of the Black Family. Despite knowing of his innocence years later, Tonks has always admired her cousin Sirius to be able to stand up to the rest of their family.

Following the two Veela women as they walk silently through the woods, Tonks looks back on happier times spent with Sirius as well as Remus and the others when she was a little girl. If Harry had been alive in all honesty, she doubts he would remember her seeing that she had only seen him that one time...

When she as well as others escorted him to Grimmauld Place...

Those were dark times, but yet filled with happiness. So much happiness...

Lost in thought, Tonks was not aware as both Veelas would occasionally look back to check on her. An unspoken look between them, Fleur cautiously sends up a signal letting them know of her and her sister's approach.

Already their innate creature senses have picked up other wolves stalking them at this moment. A predatory yet guarded gleam as occasionally gold eyes and a shadow of a wolf appear. The two blondes and their companion were indeed left alone. For despite everything they believe in...

The Way overrules their instinct. One already has a scent of acceptance from their leader...and the other is the mate to the newcomer of their pride. Although human from what their senses tell them, there is a odd power around her that makes their noses twitch with wary curiosity.

The other is simply related to one who has a scent of acceptance...it is enough that one goes to fetch their leader.

And as trio continue walking, they are stopped twenty minutes later, by a dark haired man the Fleur and Gabrielle know all to well. But as of yet Tonks has to meet...

"Alexandre, forgive me for my intrusion..." Fleur spoke quietly and submissively. Having heard the growls of anger and rage that although soft being emitted from the older man, the blonde was not stupid and had hastened to silence both her sister and companion with a look.

"It is all right Fleur...I am more upset over the intruder upon our lands. But Remus as he came through warned us that he felt she would come, regardless of his wishes." The wolf leader said with a tone of anger as he glares at Tonks. Bristling at this, she lets out an involuntary growl of annoyance, which startles the pride leader who smiles...

"I see why..." Alexandre chuckles before his face turns grim. "Still you should not have come. The Wolfling is not yet ready."

"Wolfling?"

"A pet name..." Isabelle states as she walks in behind her son. "Fleur...he has grown again...and from what he has managed to tell Remus. The other knows now." The werewolf woman said sadly, the worry of a mother evident in her voice, that Fleur hugs her. "Can I go see him?"

"Yes...and he related to me to tell you he releases you of your vow. No use keeping it now that he knows..." Isabelle quietly stated. The references to these men they are referring to confusing Gabrielle and Tonks. But as Fleur moves to go behind, the Veela girl finds herself being stopped by an irate auror, who is getting angry at the subtle nuances. Her hair rocketing through shades of red, green and purple...

"Just what is going on? And who is this he and where is Remus!"

Quiet, Fleur stills as Remus approaches, with someone beside him, although still a little weak from his change. It is enough as he steps

out of the shadow of the hall that Tonks drops to her knees in recognition. Although he looks about the age he should be, he is different...radiates more of a welcome smile that turns to guardedness as he approaches.

"Wotcher Tonks..." Replied a very tired and very much alive Harry James Potter...

Silent and just stunned at this, the woman just sits there and looks up at her wolf and a boy, who by all accounts should be dead. Fleur is happily relieved as when Harry approaches, despite her oath to him, she is released and is able to speak. Still she does not as Tonks just mutters one word...

"How...?"

"How what Tonks?" Harry replied coolly. His own memories of the time when he was accused back and in full force he remembers what this woman as well as others he once called friends had abandoned him so easily. "How did I live? Despite being kissed? Despite being burned?"

Wincing a bit at the tone of anger in his voice as well as the cold, Remus can't help but place a hand on Harry's shoulder alongside Isabelle, to calm him down. Taking several deep breaths, some of which hurt him, as his body has not finished adjusting, the dark haired hero looks to Fleur who understands.

"Remus help me back to the bed." Harry said quietly.

The older man moving with a genuine understanding looks at Tonks with a mixture of pity. Gabrielle who had seen the reaction was almost reluctant to approach her once hero and rescuer when she was younger alongside his friends. But as he turned to look at her, he raised a hand and smiled...

"It is nice to see you grown up Miss Delacourt..."

"Gabrielle..." The younger woman smiled softly.

“Then call me Harry please...”

“All right...Harry.”

Turning back to Remus, who had smiled in amusement, was pleased. It meant that Harry was trying to move on and start over. So as they continue on to the bedroom where the now young man can gain his strength, he starts lightly teasing the youth alongside Alexandre, whose nose had sniffed the interest from not just Gabrielle. But Harry as well...

In the mean time, Fleur turns to Tonks who is still somewhat in shock over the reappearance of Harry, who by all accounts has been dead for the last seven years.

“How...how is this possible? I saw his body... I saw him being burned!”

“Harry is an Animagus...” Fleur stated quietly. “Not just any kind...but a Phoenix Animagus.”

“That...that is not possible.” Tonks stood as she shook her head in disbelief. “No wizard can turn into a magical creature.”

“That is true...but I have seen it myself.” Fleur said with a soft voice. Isabelle beside her, it is repeated as she approaches.

“Fleur is right, my son and I have witnessed him change. Harry becomes a brilliant red bird with fiery wings...” The older woman intones with a gentle gaze. One that is full of strength and truth that as much as she wishes to believe that it is not possible. Looking at Isabelle...

One can't help but believe...

“He really is?”

“Yes...it was that day he was kissed, when he changed for the first time. It is what saved him. The burning of his body gave him a new one...but...”

“But what?”

“It had a side affect...it turned him into a baby.” Fleur intoned. Explaining what she has managed to understand from Harry and her own observations of the change. The older of the Delacourt sisters spoke well into the night with the occasional interjection from Isabelle and eventually the others.

By the time, Tonks now understood that despite how confusing it was...that Harry had not been able to do much of anything despite her own misgivings.

But what happens next as Remus comes back out, is what makes her pale.

“When will you both be coming back?” Tonks stated with a relieved look to her features.

Looking away for a moment, Remus just can't say anything about it that would be in such a way for the auror to understand. But it is enough that she figures it out in a moment or two...

“You...you and Harry are not coming back are you?”

“I don't know...I don't know...”

Chapter 34

Fulfillment

The Following Morning

To be honest, Tonks couldn't understand Remus's answer as he turned to check back on Harry the previous night. The Delacourt sisters having left to return home, Tonks was being allowed to stay due to her special connection of sorts with Remus. Still it hurt though...

The indecisiveness from Remus about his and Harry's return to fight was wrong. They needed them back!

"Why do you need them back?"

Turning around rapidly to find Isabelle looking at her curiously, Tonks gives a sheepish grin. "Did I say that aloud?"

"Yes." Isabelle smiled in amusement. "Still why do you need them back so much?" The werewolf woman asked in puzzlement. "Surely it is not just to fight this Voldemort only?"

About to say it wasn't just for that reason, Tonks found herself stopping short of it. For Remus she wants him back to keep him safe, that's right isn't it? And if Remus comes back surely Harry would right?

Still why can't she not just come out and say it?

"What's wrong with me?"

"What do you mean?" Isabelle stated softly.

"I want to answer..."

"But can't?"

Nodding her head, Tonks is almost filled with shame as Isabelle begins to speak. Because despite her own desperate beliefs. What the woman is about to say makes a lot of sense...

"Maybe it is because deep down, you know that is what you truly want." The older woman stated softly and with a gentle nature. "The problem is child...Harry knows it."

Stunned by her statement, Tonks allows herself to be guided towards a table, where the older woman offers her some herbal tea. Her mind in a state of shock over her statement, Tonks finds herself unable to argue against it.

But it doesn't say that she refuses to try anyway...

"That's not true though..." She finally murmured quietly. Her hair reflecting the mousy brown now showing her sadness and pain, Isabelle can not help but offer a comforting hand. "I don't want Harry to come back just to fight Voldemort."

"Young one, the fact that it took you this long to say it, no matter how much you hate to admit it. There is a part of you that wants just that. You don't want Harry to come back because you miss him...you want him to fight a battle that all of you are losing."

Surprised, Tonks watches as Isabelle just takes a sip of her tea with a sad and pained smile of pity... "Remus has told us much of what had been going on in your country and Harry has explained his past to myself and my son."

"Then you know why he has to come back!"

"No I do not..." The older woman stated. "Harry des not have to come back. It is his life that he has to put on the line. Does he not have a right to make choices regarding it?"

"But...the prophecy. He must! He's the only one who can defeat the Dark Lord?"

“Aaah yes, this prophecy... Did you know that in many cultures Death does not just mean loss of life?” Isabelle stated with a kind and gentle tone.

“I don’t understand...”

“To some Death is simply a change of path. There are some religions who believe that we never truly die. Our soul just takes on a new spiritual and powerful form. United States, Tibet, China...all has examples in stories originating from that country. In some they believe that it simply means the old life is gone and a new one has opened up...”

“How? What does this have to do with the prophecy and Harry?”

“There is always more than one way to kill someone...in some cases all you have to do to kill them is to destroy the belief that one has in those that they love.” Isabelle said softly.

It takes only a moment for it to sink into Tonks what the older woman has stated that as she thinks about it.

Is quite true...especially after a discussion she had not long after Harry’s proof of innocence had been discovered, with a very drunk Amelia Bones.

“I should have spoken up...” Amelia Bones slurred out as she sat with her friend and newest agent.

“What do you mean?” Tonks responded. Equally drinking as well, she had sat nursing the third glass of fire whiskey as her boss was on her fifth or sixth. After all someone had to make sure the older woman got home safely.

“That day of the trial...Harry looked dead! He had no life in him it was like he was there physically but mentally...no one was home.”

“That is what she meant...” Tonks replied sadly, confusing the older woman for a moment. She explained the memory of that day and of her boss’s comment.

“Yes...this prophecy you spoke of had already come to pass.” The woman said with conviction. “If your boss had seen Harry that time, your Dark lord had already won then.”

Slumping into her chair, Tonks looks bleak now... “So we destroyed ourselves then...” Tonks said with despair. “If we had not been so foolish to believe that he was guilty...none of this...none of this would have happened. We could be in peace now, rather than fight a war that should have ended years ago...”

“That is true...your people’s foolishness and rush to believe anything they see and hear is what signaled Harry’s defeat at the hands of this man and his people that you fight.”

“Then what shall we do! What can we do if Harry won’t fight?”

“I didn’t say that he wouldn’t...” Isabelle chuckled. “Harry is a good wolfer without being a wolf. He follows the Way as my people have taught him in this short time has been with us. If instincts tell him he must return to finish what was started, he will go...”

“But not before then...”

“No, I do not believe so. For Harry to come back to all of you...I think more than just wanting him to fight this Voldemort, is what will bring him to you. I believe that many must have to want him to come back for being himself and not a hero is the key. And unfortunately for your people, I think that will be a long time in happening...”

-8-

Short I know...but to be honest I think it is perfect as is

I promise I shall try to make the next one longer...

I hope this answers many questions though

Chapter 35

Conscience

Three days after growth

Earlier we spoke of pain being a form of instinct. Well that is true, to the Wolves and those who follow the Way. Conscience is another...if a shifter or any kind of creature feels like something is wrong, but yet say nothing. The instinct everytime a reference to it is made in their presence flares up...

Reminding them that something was not right with the world...

Remus watched as Harry worked out some spell issues alongside Fleur and Gabrielle. Gabrielle having come to aide in her sister's tutoring of their friend, found herself spending more and more time with her sister at the cabin.

Having returned from visiting Alexandre and Isabelle's home last night after Harry's growth a scant two days before, he and Tonks were somewhat on eggshells at the moment. Each wanting to speak...but not knowing what to say, without offending the other. And Harry...

Well, the youth found himself interested in Fleur's younger sister and much to the delight of Alexandre and Isabelle who smiled in approval. Gabrielle apparently returned the interest...

Wise to say nothing, Remus admittedly wondered if Harry moving on away from her...was the right thing to do. Only last night as he managed to avoid speaking with Tonks once more, he had walked in to catch Harry looking through pictures again and his eyes often drifted to those of the youngest Weasley.

Ginny...

"Allow me to train him to Remus."

Startled out of his train of thought, the older man turned to find his mate (for lack of a better word) staring at him with a determined look on her gaze.

“Dora?”

“You heard me Remus, allow me to train him!”

Pulling her away, gently as not to distract the youth who had glared at her with an almost rebellious stare, he turns back a moment only to find Gabrielle smacking him upside the head. The young woman, babbling a few choice words in French, Fleur is giggling as she explains to the perplexed young man. That her sister only does that when she is irritated, apparently, she thought Harry was being rude.

Pausing long enough to shake his head, his thoughts turn back to the ones he had before for only a moment. Maybe he was wrong to think about Harry's attachment to the memory of young Ginny Weasley. Gabrielle Delacourt was having more or less a better effect on Harry's life then he could ever dream.

Especially as in retaliation for it he gives an impish grin, and tackles said blonde to tickle her mercilessly.

Laughter left in their wake, he turns back and pulls Tonks into another room. The auror only struggling slightly, he releases her long enough for her to whirl on him in anger.

“Just what did you do that for?!”

“Why! Why do you want to train him?!”

Both questions shot at one another at the same time. Despite being in other rooms of the cabin, others listen to what is about to happen.

For the first time in a while... Remus Lupin was going to take a stand.

Memories of not having been able to before crowding his mind, from years ago, he is hard pressed to keep Moony under control. The werewolf had needed to say much on the hold that the Wizarding

world had on its cub. It does not want to be denied. But as the sense of Remus agreeing with it mentally finally strikes the beast within. Moony gives a low growl of irritation before quieting down.

“Tonks...why?”

Nervous and yet steadfast in her decision to do this, the Metamorphagus looks at someone she adores with all her heart.

“I want to do it for the both of you...” She said quietly. “Isabelle helped me to understand, that Harry has choices now. Choices that we inadvertently took away from him, with our needs and our desire for him to beat the Dark Lord. A lord whom we helped in destroying our hero’s faith in us...”

Listening intently, Remus resisted the urge to hug the young woman close. Proud and courageous like her cousin Sirius was before his fall, Tonks was risking a lot by admitting that what she believed in was selfish...and wrong.

“According to Harry, Voldemort now knows Harry is alive. And you and I both know he has pulled a few new tricks these last few years Remus. Even though I know he doesn’t... have to come back...he will still find him.”

About to comment, it was at that moment Harry stepped forward. His face grim and his conscience clean at the moment.

“Then train me...”

Surprised by his answer, Gabrielle and the others just look at Harry in shock. His smile turned to them gentle and kind, he speaks.

“As much as I don’t to wish to fight, Tonks is right. He will find me for like the others. He still believes.”

“Harry?” Tonks said with a small measure of shock and... A little bit of hope.

Turning eyes of emerald upon her, the life that she knew she had never seen there before shined. But it was not with warmth that it shone, it was with anger and hatred.

“Do not think I have forgotten things that were said and done to me before Tonks. I remember Azkaban and the only person I remember trying to save me unlike others I could mention. Was Remus...out of all the people I truly knew, why was he the only one who believed in me?”

“Harry...I’m sorry...”

“Don’t be...” The young man replied with detachment. “I have long since forgiven you and the others Tonks. But forgotten...that’s something else entirely.”

Stunned by his words and his feelings, the woman’s hair turned a deep brown. As her violet eyes became dark and clouded with shame... “Harry...”

“Don’t Tonks, just don’t.” Harry replied. “Voldemort will find me, no doubt about that. But I want to dictate the when and the how, he will find me. That you can help me with Tonks...”

“I promise I will do all that I can Harry...”

Silence was her only answer as the black haired man turned and strode away. The younger of the blondes going after him, they remaining ones, simply watch as she catches up. Pausing in mid step as something is said, they almost scream in sadness as he strides away furiously. Still Fleur, holds the others back as her sister growls and yells in French before striding after him.

“Fleur?”

“Gabrielle can keep an eye on him Remus.” The elder of the Delacourt sisters sated with a gentle smile. “It may be better this way, Harry has only recently truly met her and in some ways they are still strangers, despite their interest in one another.”

"I don't understand."

Chuckling quietly, Tonks looks up at a clueless Remus with a wry smile. She perfectly understands the meaning behind the Veela's words. "It is sometimes easier to talk to a stranger than it is to a loved one."

-8-

Walking silently with Harry, Gabrielle waits, for him to speak. Determined to go with him, as her instincts have told her, the young Veela was admittedly worried for him. She remembers his past quite well thanks to the revelation of his innocence. She had still been in Beauxbatons at the time, and it had shaken a many who had thought him guilty despite their ridiculous worship of him.

Much like her sister and some of their closest friends, being of magical creature blood, although in a small amount is why they believed in Harry's innocence. But as Remus had told them just this morning, it would not have made any difference.

Magical creature blood that was active as it was in him and the Delacourt sisters was not welcome by the so called Blood Purists...namely Death eaters in hiding within it. They would have made no secret about their dislike and would have some reason to force them out or to even join Harry in Azkaban on some trumped up charge.

It had taken Dumbledore a lot of pulling strings here and there to keep that from happening to Remus when he had tried to storm the trial apparently that day.

"Sometimes I wish I could make it just go away..."

Her thoughts scattered for a split second, Gabrielle looks up at Harry with thoughtful blue eyes.

"I wish I could just move on with my love, forget they ever existed...but I can't."

“Why not Harry?” Gabrielle risked commenting. Her voice soft and curious, it is also inviting him to continue on. Her senses telling her that he needs...no must speak what he can.

“Even though they essentially abandoned me...”

“You can’t do the same to them.”

Nodding his head in response, Harry lets out a pained sigh of agony and defeat. “Is it wrong to just want to forget all about it? To not go and fight?”

“No...It’s human.” The blonde replied. “They hurt you Harry. And it is only natural we want to forget those who have caused us heartache and pain.” Gabrielle regretfully stated.

“So I’m human huh...” Harry intoned wryly. “Then why...why does it feel so wrong to think these thoughts.”

“Because you would feel guilty if you did not. You know sooner or later, to bring you out he will use them as bait or even kill them. Although I have only just now started to get to know you Harry, I firmly believe despite what has happened, you would not leave them to that kind of fate.”

Thoughtful and then smiling gently, he turns his verdant eyes on her with warmth that makes her heart pound against her chest.

“You believe I wouldn’t huh...”

Shaking her head, Gabrielle smiled. “The Harry I have to come to know values life far too much to let it be destroyed because of him.”

“You think so...”

“I know so.”

Remaining silent after that, Gabrielle lets out an involuntary shiver from the cool breeze that roamed through the woods. Seconds later

she is surprised as a robe that is warm and smells invitingly like chocolate and cinnamon to her senses surrounds her body.

Looking up into the bright green eyes, the blonde gives a small smile at the slight pinkness to his cheeks. "Thank you Harry..."

Nodding his head, as if to say welcome, Harry says nothing else in response or even in conversation the rest of their time in the woods, all he did was simply stand there alongside Gabrielle.

Savoring the fact that there is someone else who knows who he is and not what he is...

Chapter 36

Time Skip...

Time is something that we never have enough or have too little. With the knowledge that Voldemort now knew of Harry's existence, training to defend not only himself, but to also fight back was stepped up. Between Tonks and Alexandre many bases were covered in what would be the next two-three months daily.

In this time many things started happening and within the Wizarding world. Attacks began to increase steadily and messages although random, were deliberately being placed at the attacks.

All with the intent to taunt and lure out Harry from wherever he was hiding.

If no one knew Harry was alive before. These months of hell made sure they did now. So many different reactions started happening all over the UK. To some hope stirred again, having gone into hiding to keep from getting killed for their beliefs, many of the light side had ventured out. Risking capture from those who would kill them...

Among them was Neville Longbottom, the other child in reference to the prophecy, he had been targeted after Harry's death for reasons he could not understand. It had taken almost a year's worth of trouble before Dumbledore had explained about the prophecy. About how he almost would have ended up like Harry, except for the fact he was pure-blooded unlike Harry who was like Riddle.

A Half-blood...

Neville was relieved and ashamed of himself at his reaction nowadays. But it helped that in the time he spent hiding it allowed him time to mourn first over the death of his grandmother to old age. Following shortly thereafter the deaths of his parents...

Both had been killed just last month, while in St Mungo's by Bellatrix Black. As she escaped she commented loudly that she had only done it in a pique if fancy.

It only further enraged the young man and he had vowed to find some way to kill her.

Others like Neville began to step forward. Nothing really holding them back anymore as there only reasons for hiding started to die around them...

Wizards, muggles, shifters, and all sorts of living beings were hurting.

-8-

During this time, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger continued to search for their lost friend. Now believing he was indeed alive more then ever with each attack, the two had forged on. First attempting to reach Remus, they had been foiled in that retrospect by Dumbledore, who had stated that he had sent the werewolf along with Tonks to try and make contacts on the mainland.

When he had asked why... The two simply stated one name. One whom they felt they needed to see. Needed to find, even if only to have him hate them to rest of their life. They still needed to find Harry to tell him...

I'm sorry...

Dumbledore said nothing but wished them safe journey. Because for all honesty, he had wished to go with them, to find Harry, to find some measure of peace again as he had once.

Minerva, who had watched quietly from a chair in the office, had said nothing. She was there when he doubted the validity of these accusations against her former lion. She was there when evidence kept piling up and her dear friend was further doubting...

And as it went on, when he still tried to believe in the end she forced him to see what she thought was the truth. That Harry had committed

murder, when in fact he had not. To find he was innocent all along as Albus had thought in the beginning. She had wept for days in pain and regret.

She had failed her student...

"Minerva..."

"Yes Albus?"

"Do you think...he will ever forgive us?"

The woman remained silent and sad. Her thoughts taking pity on her closest friend, she simply shrugged. "I don't know Albus...I don't know."

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France

During this time as the world Harry and Remus had left to protect one another as well as help each other grow suffered.

They were in flourishing despite the extensive training done to both. With Tonks's aide in training Harry to fight against other wizards alongside Alexandre and his pack helping him with creatures of the night. The young man was indeed growing strong. What was surprising though was that Gabrielle was training alongside him.

The two had indeed gotten close and Remus hoped that they continued to get closer as time progressed. Although she had only recently turned 18 to his 23, Gabrielle was good for his battered soul. A kind hearted young woman, she and her sister were becoming his family along with the pride.

Everyone was helping Harry to heal. Even Tonks to a degree was for just last week Harry had allowed her to touch him, when she had blasted a cutting hex at him and he couldn't dodge in time.

Before when they had started, the only people who could touch him had been anybody but her. When he had asked Harry, why he had allowed he to touch him later on, the young man turned to look at him and stated simply.

“For you Remus...”

Harry had done it for him, knowing how he felt about Tonks. Remus despite his desire to would have never gotten close to her again, if he had thought it would part him and Harry. He and Moony both agreed they couldn't have that happen. After all he had become their cub... Smiling in memory at that Remus turns back to the other issue at hand for himself.

Alexandre had decided that he and his pack as well as their allies will come and help fight for the Light. After all Isabelle and most of them would kill him if he allowed their Harry to get killed by a madman. The pride adored the youth when he turned into a phoenix and sang for them. Or just plain outright treated them as normal folks...

And quite frankly...he wouldn't blame them in the slightest, if they did kill him as a result of his death. He adored the kid to. In fact he saw Harry as a little brother... But it was on one condition...

Remus must take out Greyback...

That was easier said then done. Despite his their own queasiness, everyone not shifter unfortunately agreed with what Alexandre's condition. Greyback was Voldemort's strongest ally. Take him out of the equation and in such a way that none of the other shifters can argue. Voldemort will lose over half of his strongest fighters in moments.

To help him overcome the challenge of combat, Remus under Alexandre's express orders was working with Henri and Jacqueline, his Betas in the pride and his mother's guards. Both alphas in their own right, they agreed with Alexandre that Remus needed to know ways to do it to satisfy the beasts that were sure to watch.

So at the moment, Remus was allowing Moony to take over and the Silver wolf growled in warning out of instinct. It was at the moment two reddish wolves' pounced pounce and the fight was on...

-8-

Watching the events from someplace else, the dark haired man known as Sirius Black grumbled and ranted about the unfairness of it all. Nimue listening to his words with an amused look upon his features daintily dipped a hand into the water to make the images vanish.

"DAMNIT! I should be there! Harry! Remus! They need me!"

"Then find your way out Sirius Black...I can not help you since I was not the one who put you here."

Glaring at her with irritation, the fae witch simply raised an eyebrow and turned back to the water. Her fingers playing idly in it, it was at that moment that her green eyes widened in pain and heartbreak at the images that passed through her mind.

Images that caused her pain...

Turning into a phoenix she fled so as not to give what she had seen away to the man beside her.

After all it is not good to spread news of death.

-8-

Runs for the hills...

Yeah I hate to do it folks, but Harry is crying right now my head. Someone close to him will die. How soon? I don't know he's rather incoherent at the moment. When I find out you will know...I will be to busy bawling to

Chapter 37

Return...

Dumbledore was in shock at the report and presence of power, which Remus had given him. Remus had obviously changed in the short time he had spent with this pride called La Royaute. He was still quiet and non-invasive about most things, but Remus exuded power now. Contained though it was, even Dumbledore could feel the strength of the beast inside one of his most trusted friends.

“You’ve grown...”

Chuckling in amusement somewhat, Remus flashed the amber eyes of Moony. Dumbledore was surprised to see that the Wolf was calm, rather than crazed. Curious as to how this is possible, Remus beats him to the punch as he begins explaining what he had learned from Alexandre.

The older man listening his eyes just widen in surprise at all this. “I see...has anything else happened?”

About to comment, it is at that moment, that Dumbledore becomes shocked as another phoenix of exquisite and radiant beauty flashes in to sing above Remus’s head. Beautifully scarlet in color, with green and black tipped wings. It landed delicately upon his former student’s shoulder to nuzzle his cheek.

“I withdraw my question...” Albus chuckled in light hearted warmth. “Have you bonded with him?”

“You could say that.” The werewolf replied with a soft smile. One that puzzles the older man, to such a degree that he attempts to and out of habit. Read the wolf’s mind...

Only to have his mind forced out with the snarl of a growl and threat of teeth.

STAY OUT!

Thrust back into his chair, amber eyes of the wolf stare at him from within Remus's normally gentle gaze. Now that is filled with rage, it is at that moment that Albus hears the song, the new bird sings. One song, which is shortly joined in by another from his own phoenix that sings its own tune to help and to calm...

Gentle and full of light and love, the beast within Remus listens and as much as the rage wants to stay, it calms and slowly returns to the treasured light brown of the beloved Defense Wizard.

Still although the anger of the wolf has receded, the anger of the wizard has not. The phoenix on Remus's shoulders glaring at him as it sings a melody of dark disapproval. Stunning the older wizard, who had never thought that such a creature of light, could feel that kind of emotion.

"Is that how you seem to know everything Albus?" Remus stated coldly. "Reading our minds?"

"How..."

"How did I know? How did I block you out? Simply put...Moony told me, before my friend here calmed him down."

Startled by this statement it was at that moment, which Hermione and Ron chose to come in. Taking this as an excuse to leave before he did something he might regret. He was prevented to as only for a moment, he finds himself cornered by Ron and Hermione. The two of them are returning from yet another failed attempt in trying to find Harry.

"Remus...?"

Caught off guard for a moment, Albus wonders why Remus looks towards the phoenix upon his shoulder. The one that although beautiful and unique, at the sight of Ron and Hermione...it now looked dull and not as filled with light as before...if anything it looked sad and angry.

"Ron...Hermione."

“Remus has Harry contacted you?” The young woman asked. Her eyes full of hope, the wolf says nothing as he shakes his head. For despite everything he can feel the talons of Harry’s phoenix form digging into his shoulder. Wanting to flee, but staying for the older man beside him.

“How can he Hermione, he’s dead, remember.” Remus said quietly. Leaving before he could reveal or say anything else, the wolf gently, but firmly pushes her and the other to the side. The two of them looking at the wolf in sadness, Hermione is about to speak of what is happening when she is silenced.

She whirls around angrily, to find their former headmaster looking at her as he shakes his head. “Forgive me Miss Granger but do not tell him yet. It would not be fair to get his hopes up if indeed Harry is alive. You did not see him when he had thought that Arabella had found him. He was crushed when I told him that the child she had seen could not have been Harry.” The old wizard sadly stated. “Let’s wait until we have Harry back for sure...before we tell him.”

Releasing the Silencio, Hermione nodded her head simply despite her disagreement. Remus in her eyes deserved to know that there might be a chance that her friend was still alive.

Friend...was she ever truly one to Harry?

Walking out of the office after giving a brief report to Dumbledore, she and Ron were silent and dejected. “Maybe Remus is right Ron...maybe Harry is dead.”

“No...Dumbledore relayed to us that Voldemort believes Harry is alive, Hermione. The fact that Voldemort has not let up on any of his attacks or those crazy messages he has left all over the place after he’s done. Harry must be alive! He must be!”

Smiling at Ron’s determination, Hermione starts to turn as they approach the end of the hallway to head down some stairs. A quick glance out the window allows her, to call for Ron and they both

observe in silence at how the phoenix flies around Remus, singing its magic.

Even from their positions up high, they could hear and feel the warmth of the light filled songs of magic enter their spirits and make them stronger. It was indeed beautiful...

But what shocks them though is as Remus was stepping out of the gate; the bird had stopped singing and shifted into an emerald cloaked figure that they could not see. Obviously male by the stance and gestures being made as he chats with Remus, the two can't seem to get past what they had just witnessed. "Did you just see that?" Ron asked with wide eyes. "That's shouldn't be possible. No wizard or witch can be a magical creature. NONE!"

About ready to race down to confront Remus, the older man has already apparated. Having stepped officially outside of Hogwarts once he past the gate, he escaped before they could take one step. Still it was at the moment, when the cloak figure turned and looked up that the two of them gasped in a mixture of happiness and sorrow.

Pushing down his hood, Harry James Potter stared at them with cold eyes filled with pain and rage.

"Harry!"

Raising a hand that holds a new wand, as his had been snapped. Made from the wood of a White Ash tree, inside it as the core were two of the feathers from Harry's Animagus and the silvery fur from Moony. The Wolf willingly giving up some of his power to protect his cub, he had happily donated some of his fur to the making of Harry's wand.

Green eyes glaring at them, Ron and Hermione try to back away before the truth fights back. But it is too late as a bright light strikes them both...

Obliviate

-8-

Having sensed his two old friends watching them, Harry had to shift to let Remus know what he was going to do. Admittedly the wolf was not pleased at having to do it to the two who were once Harry's closest friends. But he knew it had to be done, Albus would have tried to drag Harry back the minute they stated they had seen their missing former friend...

Still as the glazed look enters their eyes he hesitates from giving the counter to the curse, despite what they had done, to him. He can't help but feel a twinge of want as he looks at the both of them. They were his first friends after all. Still knowing that Hogwarts is alerting those within that some kind of hex or curse spell was put on two within, he manages to escape before the barrier wards go up.

Shifting into phoenix form he flames out...thoughtful about things. He arrives at his destination to be greeted with a hug by a young blonde woman whom he has grown to care for very much.

Tilting her head up, he bends down to catch her lips much to her pleasure as well as his own. "Harry..."

"For a greeting like that Miss Gabrielle Delacourt, I would gladly kiss you everyday." The black haired man said softly as the blonde whimpered in delight. Remus having only arrived moments before smiles and approves...

In these past three months Gabrielle has helped Harry with simply listening and offering her own words of advice. She had tempered the anger considerably and his magic is more focused then ever. For around his neck is a gift from the young woman...

To help Harry control his magic, when he is angry and upset, she had gotten him a specialized focus of sorts from the Veela. Considering the fact that Veelas involuntarily change into things they had rather not, the crystal should help Harry control the bouts of power that could give him away.

And it has worked so far, a couple of times it had kept Harry from turning and releasing bouts of magic when he stopped his former

mentor and pseudo grandfather from invading Remus's mind. He had been ready to curse Dumbledore into oblivion, phoenix form or not.

That's when he felt the crystal's power flare and drain his anger enough that he was able to think clearly. All he done was simply sing a song of disapproval as he glared at a man he once respected. Maybe even loved...

Shaking his head as he got rid of those depressing and sad thoughts, he turned to Gabrielle who had a warm smile upon her features. The young blonde offering her hand out, he takes it as heads over to where her older sister and Remus are along with several pride members from La Royaute.

The place they were using was one that Sirius in his death had left to Remus to hold for Harry as it was his connection to his former family. Large and spacious as well as the land around it...

Harry had arrived home at the recently restored Godric's Hollow. Entering the home with Gabrielle in hand, and followed by the others. The only living Potter found he was crying as childhood memories, which he had thought lost, began to overwhelm him. Memories that were further coming to life as pictures that he had thought were destroyed were magnified and placed all over the house.

There were pictures of his parents alone and with Sirius and Remus all over. Pictures of Lily and James, pictures that showed how much that he meant to them were for all to see and smile as Harry touched every single one with a need to rival any kind.

And now new pictures were amongst them as well. Ones of himself with Gabrielle and her sister... These pictures are with two women whom he has started to adore as much as he did two others. One of which he has started to love with all his heart, and one whom he now calls his dearest friend.

There are others that he cherishes as much that are new as well. They are pictures of him getting spoiled as a child by Isabelle and playing with Alexandre who acts like a big brother more than anything.

Pictures that remind Harry he has people who love him for him...in life and in death.

“Remus...how?” Harry said with tears in his eyes. He looks at the wolf, whose gentle gaze mirrors his own. Tonks smiling gently, as does Gabrielle, both women step away long enough for Harry to be pulled into a tight embrace by the shifter.

“Because despite lack of a blood tie Harry, you are my cub and will always be whether you want to or not and I will do anything to make you happy.”

Nothing else is said as the two continue to share a hug and memories that have long past...

Chapter 38

Memory

Albus was startled as the sensors for Magic against others went off loudly within Hogwarts. Recently added to let the teachers know what was happening during these troubled times, he immediately rushed out prepared to battle if necessary. The last few times it had gone off, Death Eaters had somehow managed to get into the school.

At the moment, he was glad that students were away as it was a holiday weekend. Means he and the other teachers would not have to worry about those who could get hurt.

Approaching where the alarms were coming from, the elderly wizard is stunned to find both Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley with dazed expressions on their features. Minerva having just caught up that time along with Madame Pomphrey ran diagnostic charms over both of them and frowned.

“What is it?”

“They’ve both been obliviated Albus.” Poppy replied. “It is an exceptionally strong one to. I can try to restore the memories that were lost, but more than likely it would only hurt them even more.” The nurse said reluctantly. “I’m sorry Albus, with an Obliviate spell this strong; there is nothing I can do to help them.”

“Except to allow it to wear off in time, and hope that they still remember.”

Nodding her head in agreement with his comment, the nurse gently guides his former students to the medical wing of Hogwarts. With Minerva beside her, they moved Ron and Hermione, who were starting to come around. The confusion on their faces evident, they proceeded with the standard questions when a person is cursed with a memory spell.

Walking back towards his office, Albus finds Severus waiting for him. The potions master was waiting for him with a tired and yet anxious expression on his features.

“Severus?”

“Tomorrow, Diagon Alley again, but this time he intends to kill.” The potions master implied. “He is getting angrier by the day that he has not shown himself. He believes that in doing what he plans tomorrow it will force Potter out.”

Giving a small sigh, he and Severus heads into his office, where he summons the order. Eventually as people start showing up to headquarters, Dumbledore finds himself startled as Remus appears once more. His phoenix on his shoulder now, the old headmaster reaches out tentatively, only to find a growl and a pulling away as his only response.

Visibly hurt by this once favored student's withdrawal, Dumbledore turned to the task at hand. As the other members greeted Remus, and looked at his newfound friend with admiration. The phoenix once again glittering with bright plumage, it's feathers burning slightly with a warm caressing fire alongside the wolf.

Something tells Albus, that despite the strength that Remus displayed before in driving him out. That the phoenix was now there, so that his former student and his beast would not have to... For once the old headmaster was ashamed of something he had done to someone he learned to value again.

Quiet in thought now, as more and more order members arrive at Hogwarts. Albus begins to recall when the small organization had begun to grow steadily...

People had flocked to the Order, because like the Potters as well as Sirius and the others had done. They knew that in what was to come, the Ministry and all their rules would be inefficient and sometimes downright too late to stop Voldemort from accomplishing what he set out the do.

It was why they had grown earlier.

Nowadays though, many joined and simply because they believed that the Order could protect them better than the Ministry. They had come and offered their simple services and spells to the best of their abilities. Even squibs had come and although they could not do any magic, for some it had made them ideal handlers for those who could not come as easily, when called.

With no magical aura to speak of to detect, many of the more basic and common wards did not react to their presence. So therefore many of the squibs were able to work as groundskeepers for the Death Eaters and their families. They were vital as to keeping track of where many of them came and went.

It was their only way since Harry's death...

"Albus?"

Confused for a moment as he is pulled away from his thoughts, the elderly man looks up to find Molly Weasley looking at him with concern. Her husband behind her, Albus smiles gently as this kind hearted woman had suffered more than most of the others here knew.

She had accepted Harry into her home and treated him as one of her own. She alongside with her family had gone many times to pick the youth up from the Dursleys. And would often rant for days to either him or her husband about how thin and sickly the youth looked. It was always Molly, who had stuffed him full of food daily, and made sure that the teenager would drink the potions that Severus would make to restore anything he had lost.

The latter being of which she had demanded the potions master make despite his dislike of the youth, to this day his ears ring sometimes at the memories of that infamous row between the Weasley matriarch and the Potions master. Out of habit, he looked to a seat that was next to a normal but still dazed Ron and Hermione. One that remains empty as if waiting for the person it was meant to be for.

Catching his gaze, upon the seat by her son, Molly understood and squeezed Albus's hand within her own. She herself felt that she shamed her family when she stood behind the law and condemned a boy to a death he did not deserve deep in her heart. It was a mother's instinct that warned her not to believe what was being told or said about him.

But yet, everything was against him! How could she not?

So many things she had done and made with him and her kids in the house. She had destroyed them all in her grief and misery over his guilt. A guilt that she believed so much in, with all that evidence, she could not consciously see him as anything but guilty of the murders.

Only to find she had nothing left to remember a boy who had needed her so much...who was discovered innocent and very much dead a year later. Molly had never really forgiven herself. Since that day she has not only lost two of her children to death, Ginny has gone to the death eaters willingly much to the older woman's shame.

Ron has distanced himself from the girl whom he and his magic have chosen for his wife.

Her other children were solemn and miserable. Bill had lost Fleur, because she had tried to tell them that something was wrong with this evidence. Her magic tingling all the time as he spoke the now eldest Weasley had scoffed causing a bitter fight between the couple.

Since then Bill has been miserable, because Fleur had left him and had not spoken to him since.

Percy was scarred and still working for the ministry, but after all that had been revealed it was he alone who worked with the Minister in hopes of keeping what is left of it pure and whole. Because of what he had finally realized it had taken him some time, but he had come back to the fold.

As to the survivor of the twins, he still ran their once shared joke shop, but now in secret he also provided weapons among other things that

he invented to those who seek protection in places where they could no longer guarantee it.

The Wizarding world had become such a dark and dreary place, that Molly rarely went out anymore.

And it was all because she failed to believe in that instinct as a Mother in protecting her children. Taking her seat beside her husband she failed to notice the sadness and the pain of the phoenix looking at her from Remus's shoulder. The one whose own memories of this kind woman from his past assaulted him now, of both good and bad.

Pain fills his heart once again, and the crystal glows for a moment to keep him from revealing his presence to the world and the order. Harry had a lot of good memories involving these men and women. Many of which had proved very important to him growing up, as they had shaped him into what he believed and whom he could trust.

But that trial and everything...

To have those he loved with all his heart and soul believe he can do something so vile. It destroyed that trust he held for them. That trust he had given so desperately, so needing their understanding of things he did not.

It still hurts even to this day.

So he resisted the urge to shift, resisted the urge to greet these people and scream the anger and the pain at their betrayal. Instead he thought of the pretty blonde waiting for him with her sister at his family home. Gabrielle was not Ginny, but she was someone whom had carefully gotten into his heart.

Where Ginny had been in trouble often enough during those years in Hogwarts to push them together, Gabrielle had not. She had simply come to him on her own. Talking and treating him like anyone else, she had not treated him special as Ginny did at first, before she realized he hated it. She did not constantly fawn over him as many did from his school days.

The blonde simply treated him like a normal guy. And for that the Veela girl had earned her place in his heart, with her beauty, her kindness, and her emotional bursts of temper. When she disagreed with something he said, or point blank just seemed to rude to her or anyone they knew.

It had even led to Tonks teasing him about turning into Gomez Addams much to his embarrassment. Gabrielle had been confused at first, but after having it explained by both Harry and Tonks as a muggle show, she had giggled.

To tease Harry a little bit, she had spoken some French that was soft and husky to his ears. And admittedly Harry, was definitely wondering what she had said, for he had the urge to kiss her senseless as she spoke.

In fact he did a second later as he couldn't resist her bribery to tell him what she said in English for the price of such a kiss.

Yep...he was becoming like Gomez Addams...oh well. He and Morticia were happy. So will he and Gabrielle be as well.

But yet his mind drifts back to a certain red head from his past... his heart aches in pain. Remembering his conversation with Gabrielle, and his worry over not able to give his heart fully to her, the blonde had placed her fingers to his lips in a silent entreaty. This was when he was really truly beginning to realize he liked her very much...maybe even loved her.

"Harry do you love us the same way?"

Startled by this question, the black haired man had shaken his head, causing the blonde to smile with warmth.

"Then I am happy. I know it is too soon for you to give me your full heart all the way yet Harry. But she is your first love and you never forget those...I hope to be your last though if you will allow me...Oui?"

...She hopes to be his last. And she was starting to get her wish. Lately he has not thought about Ginny at all since Gabrielle has said

those words to him. The Veela girl was making him forget, with her warmth, her laughter and her French words.

Grinning as he was with delight, it was at that moment, which someone chose to talk to Harry. His own voice musical and chirping with pleasure at Harry's happiness, Fawkes had decided to speak.

Surprised he could understand the notes, which Fawkes was telling him...Harry listened in confusion.

Speak with Luna Lovegood.

A note of confusion from his notes in response to Fawkes' statement, it was at that moment said blonde woman danced in. The others giving small groans of irritation, as she had never truly changed despite everything, Luna had spied him and Remus and smiled. Coming towards him and his adoptive wolf father of sorts, Luna placed a soft hand on his feathers and glided them down in a way that made him croon with delight.

She might be unusual most of the time, but Luna sometimes had an insight to things that no one else can see. "Such a pretty bird, Nimue must be proud." The blonde said with a dreamy voice. Drifting to the seat beside them, Harry just looked at her in shock, as Remus struggled not to be surprised as well.

"Luna?" Remus asked curiously. "What do you mean?"

"Hmmm?" Was the only answer they had received. Her expression somewhat blank as she seemed to be listening to something else, the wolf and his 'bonded' turn back to the meeting. Alert to the warnings of a pending attack sometime in Diagon Alley, the two men both make notes to ask the women in their lives to be careful.

As the meeting continued, the two silently communicated with each other to make plans of their own. If Voldemort wanted Harry to come out of hiding, then so be it.

So as the meeting ended, and the order members started to leave, Remus approached Luna with Harry on phoenix form still on his

shoulder. Watching as she nodded her head and seem to be smiling at something, the young woman just took a hold of his arm and apperated with Harry along for the ride.

-8-

Appearing twenty minutes or so later, as Luna had apperated all over the place as if to discourage followers or something else, the young woman finally let go in the middle of a field of heather in Scotland.

Dancing once again, she looked towards Harry despite his bird form and held out her hand. "Come Harry we must speak."

Somehow, Harry trusts this odd woman and indeed does so. Leaping off of Remus he shifts and lands lightly on his feet, cloaked once more, he takes the hand that is offered as Luna turns back to Remus with a smile.

Offering her other one towards the werewolf, it is as he takes it that she speaks again. The prophecy clear in her mind, Harry hears the words of the true seer concerning his life and that of others.

Blessed by Nimue

One shall rise

Protected by the wolfen pride

Never a child but an adult first

Allowed to be a child again

And then an adult at last

Hope is the Phoenix that is and isn't

For Darkness shall fall before it

Startled by the words, the blonde is speaking in a voice much like Sybil Trelawney had years ago. Remus and Harry look at one

another in astonishment as Luna comes out of her trance. Curiously looking at Harry and Remus she gives a small smile and twirls around.

“What did I say now?” The young woman replied in a dreamy like voice as she starts picking sprigs of heather as she hums a little tune. But before Harry or Remus could answer, the young woman continued speaking this time, it threw even the one watching for a loop because as she looked up...

He could swear she was staring right at him.

Like one trapped before

The Grim resides

Growth is the key to freedom from mine

Realization that all is not the same is the test all must pass

Freedom then for the Grim will come

But the price will be high

Death is the key

To survive for love to the blessed one

Must be given in exchange

To free he who is wanted by the Phoenix that isn't but is

A willing sacrifice must be made

-8-

dances away

Cryptic but not too much I hope for you to figure out what that is alluding to. Had a fit with this chapter all week...not one of my better ones...oh well goes on the list of FIXIT LATERs!

TOODLES!

Chapter 38

Appearance 1

Remaining in his phoenix form high in the rooftops above Diagon Alley, Harry remained quiet and thoughtful next to Remus and the others from the pride. Jacqueline and Henri, who had come with them at Alexandre's request along with other wolves. Both were staying with Fleur, Gabrielle, and Tonks at a heavily warded Godric's Hollow, thus Harry felt he was able to concentrate on what must be done.

Their safety after all was assured.

Still his mind drifted to the previous night and the words Luna had stated to not only himself but Remus as well. Words that alluded to a certain someone still being alive just trapped...

Sirius Black

Harry would do just about anything to have his godfather back. It's not that he doesn't love Remus and Alexandre and Isabelle. But Sirius was the first to want Harry for Harry. Not for being the boy-who-lived or the savior of the Wizarding world. Sirius was the first to give him honest to goodness real hope that he could have a genuine home.

Giving a small sound of sadness, the phoenix felt a reassuring pat on his feathers, from a Wolf who smiled at him with warmth. An understanding gaze passing between them as he and Remus had discussed Luna's words well into the night. Both prophecies ringing in their ears, the two knew that the first one referred to Harry's life now.

Meeting up with Alexandre and the pride had indeed made them stronger. Remus, who despite being a wizard had felt like he could not aide or do all that he could do to support his friends or family. Now believed that not only could he aide them. But he could protect them better then most.

Moony was lending him his senses when not in wolf form. He could detect things better now as they approach rather than be surprised and risk losing people he cared for.

Shaken out of his thoughts, by the tightening talons of the phoenix on his shoulders, Remus and the others sniff the air, to detect the distinct fragrance of darkness. Looking down from the shadows of their hidden spots on the roof, as most of the order mingles with the public.

At that moment Harry shifts, as Remus lets out an animalistic sound. That moment the wolves start to move. Hanging close to the shadows, despite the daylight, Remus already sees Harry moving to do his part. His cloak remaining firmly up to hide his features until the right moment, he himself had already started to move.

Harry was searching for someone.

Someone whom apparently wanted to have a nice discussion with him...

As he was searching, he observed as Death eaters were being snatched left and right. Unlike the ministry that would simply stun and question them, about imperious and other forms of coercion, the wolves would actually do the same thing. But the difference would be in the scent of the individual.

Basically, if you passed you lived, if you failed, the wolves snapped your neck...

Having cast a spell to allow each wolf to communicate with himself or Remus, so far out of the ten death eaters yanked into the shadows at various points of Diagon alley. Four of them have proven to be innocent and under the imperious or circumstances forced them into this life to protect their families.

The other six had volunteered including one McNair. Known as the executioner of the Ministry, the fact that he was found and caught was indeed something of a coup. Considering the vile man was one

of the inner elite to Voldemort himself, Harry considered that a plus that all was moving according to plan.

He, Remus, and the wolves were setting up a series of escape routes for those who had no ability to fight. Many had died according to what they had read about that first fateful attack on Diagon Alley. They had died simply because there was no where to go.

No where to escape...

Despite being the center of the British Wizarding World, Diagon Alley was a death trap to the newcomers of the Wizarding world in England. Magical or not, if one did not know their way around the streets. One usually could and did get lost without ever really trying.

And this is the reason why Harry and Remus were adding onto Dumbledore's plan concerning the defense of this area. The wolves were coming along to act as sentries for those who can not escape and to help those who could not simply disappear.

Moving steadily, the hood drawn across his features lending to the shadows and the mysterious appearance, Harry despite the fact his cloak was deep emerald green was stopped by aurors on patrol.

Giving a small groan of irritation, Harry allows himself to be drawn to a side. Not wanting to make a scene yet announcing his return, the young man gazes at the men steadily from beneath the hooded cowl of his cloak.

"Who might you be? Never seen a cloak like yours before..." The older of the two stated. His eyes guarded and well versed in battle.

"I am a simple traveler just passing through." Harry responded with a gentle and yet steely voice. "Tell me how goes the war?"

Startled and now alert by his seemingly innocent statement, the aurors promptly ignore it as screams echo through Diagon alley.

"DEMENTORS!"

“DEATH EATERS ATTACK!”

All else forgotten, Harry whirls as he ignores the cries of the two men who had stopped him. Reason being is that all over the shopping area, many Death Eaters had moved into duels with aurors or order members that had come to help save the populace. Through their spell connection Harry, hears the wolves pulling innocent muggles here with their children who were magical as well as other families trying to escape the firefight.

Thanking whatever gods there were that Remus had the foresight to make port keys once the wards became active, his magic tingles as the Ministry finally gets the wards up. But it was not before close to 60 Death eaters as well as Dementors had appeared within the streets.

Whisking his wand out, Harry hoped to god that his patronus had changed, but to be honest. He doubts it as he cries the spell to send the two Dementors off of a man trying to defend his two children.

“Expecto Patronum!”

At once a bright and beautiful silver stag appeared. Leaping like it always does in a proud fashion; it goes straight for the dementors. Its power fluctuating brighter as it approaches; the dementors sheer off rapidly, much to the poor man’s relief as he was covering the figures of his two sons. Both around 5-6 years old, he had been trapped and not able to escape from his position with them when the attack had begun.

Beckoning for a wolf named Marcus to come forth, the said shifter approaches and helps him and Harry out, by grabbing one of the children as Harry grabs the other. The older man thanking them both, he grasps the Portkey and is immediately vanished with his children to the safety of Hogwarts.

As all that was happening though, the Patronus that Harry had summoned, was making the rounds of the Dementors. Immensely strong because of the caster’s growth since last it was called, it had

enough magic to maintain itself for several more minutes. More than enough time for those who know of the stag, to look around...

Some in anger and hate...

"It can't be... Our Lord was right! Potter is here! FIND HIM!" Bellatrix screamed.

Many Ministry and Order, at the sound of her scream were alike in hope. They were searching for that head of familiar dark hair, and vivid green eyes. Ones that can guarantee them a victory and maybe a little step back into normalcy. Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger were two such people.

Fighting and aiding their friends and allies in their own battles, to give them upper hands where they could. The two were eagerly searching for their missing friend. For like Bellatrix, they recognized the familiar stag patronus, the one that according to Remus Lupin as well as a departed Sirius Black was a perfect copy of Harry's father.

Casting a hasty Wingardium Leviosa spell, Hermione saved an auror from being crushed to death, by a death eater's spell. The auror screaming his thanks, leaps back up to continue fighting. Having been dazed he had not been aware of the destruction above his head raining down to kill him.

There was still no sign of Harry though...

They still continued to fight, never noticing the green cloaked figure running around. Pulling innocent people left and right out of the battle zone, the wolves shifting into their forms protecting the people that fled by them. The people not understanding, shrieking thinking they were here to aide in their deaths was shocked as the wolves pulled them into the safety of the alley with the aide of a green cloaked figure.

"These are portkeys to Hogwarts school. TAKE THEM!"

Not needing to be told twice, as something about this cloaked man's words hit a chord of truth. The men and women latched onto the portkeys and vanished.

Slowly but surely, the only ones left in Diagon Alley, were those who were fighting. Remus now on the ground beside Harry looked at the youth who seemed reluctant to go out and join in the battle.

"You do not have to Harry..." Remus worded kindly over the shouts and incantations. The older man studying his adopted godson's worries that have re-emerged like old friends. In response Harry turned to Remus, with a kind and yet tired smile...

"Like Gabrielle told me Remus...I have to whether I want it or not. I would feel guilty if I didn't. At least this way now, Voldemort will be focused more on me, then on everyone else..."

Stepping forth, Harry pulled out his wand and lowered his hood.

It did not take long as he started casting spells at light and dark wizards alike for everyone to notice. People were stunned, petrified, everything that you could think of as Harry walked through. Everything save killing...

Dementors were banished thanks to the Patroni from both Harry and Remus.

But as he approached the fiercer fighting, Harry stops as two very familiar voices hold him in place.

"Harry?"

"Mate?"

Turning around, Harry gazes at both Ron and Hermione with cold green eyes.

Chapter 40

Appearance 2

To say that Harry was happy to see his long lost friends was true. To a degree he was extremely happy, that he was face to face with them and that he wanted to talk about all the good times they had together.

But that was not the case now...

Not only were they in the middle of a battle in Diagon Alley. Pain and rage that Harry had from their betrayal of his beliefs had risen and for once Harry was actually raising his wand towards them.

"Harry please..." Hermione whispered. "Don't do this..."

"Do what Hermione..." Harry said softly. "I thought you were my best friend. And Ron...he was my brother in everything but blood. Why didn't you guys believe in me? How come you never tried to save me as Remus did?"

"Harry..." The brown haired girl whispered heart-brokenly. "Everything...everyone...was saying you were guilty. I mean even you!"

"Yes I know even me...but did you ever once remember that with magic as Ron so often pointed out that anything is possible?"

In response to that comment Ron said nothing and did not raise his wand against the man who now held his firmly against them. A man that was once his childhood friend, for what he had done...he does not blame Harry for aiming at them. Grasping onto Hermione's hand, the witch is momentarily puzzled by Ron. As he silences her with a hand over her mouth.

"Ron..." Hermione whispered brokenly. "We have to get him to understand. To tell him..."

"He won't listen..." The red head stated sadly. Looking into the jade green eyes of his friend, as he holds her close, Ron finds his own for

the first time grieving for the close friendship he once had with this imposing figure. "For whatever its worth, Harry...I'm sorry. I'm sorry I wasn't the brother you needed me to be when it counted."

Looking away, not even able to take the coldness from his gaze it was at the moment a bright light of a stupefy spell sails past them. In shock that it was a simple child's spell that he aimed at them. The two open their eyes to find a Death Eater that had been close to killing them with non Wizzarding means falls to the ground.

Turning back to face him, Harry had turned around, his back stiff as if wanting to do something else. "That was for the past we had between us..."

"Harry?"

"Don't try and find me again." That said Harry takes off into the fighting. His green cloak billowing behind him, it takes only a moment, before Hermione and Ron realize what he had done.

"He saved us?"

Chasing after that disappearing figure, the two former friends and lovers chased after their missing comrade. Determined to ask and to find out so many reasons as to why he has been gone.

Why he has returned?

And most of all...why did he not take his vengeance when he had the chance?

-8-

Hogwarts

As all this was happening, in Diagon Alley, elsewhere reports of the familiar stag reached a certain individual. He immediately left his office, intent on flooing or even port-keying in to see his former student. For Albus Dumbledore was in a flurry of mixed emotions.

Having continuously received reports from the fighters on the front, he was shocked at the news of a Patronus in the shape of a stag. A stag that could only be conjured by one Harry James Potter...

Somehow Harry survived Azkaban and most of all he survived being kissed...

Flooding in as he shouts for the Leaky Cauldron, he finds himself pushed back out immediately. The wards having flared up, Albus realizes that as long as the battle continues he can not enter Diagon Alley or any place close to it.

After all, the entire Ministry would not want the Death Eaters to escape.

So instead he paces. He continues pacing in hopes of good news. In hopes that not only are the battles won. But that Harry has returned as well...

He continues to wait...

But in the meantime as he goes back to his office, Dumbledore is puzzled. A distinct scent of roses about his office and there stands before him a stately woman with long red hair and wearing a set of scarlet robes. Cooing to Fawkes who was responding to her caresses with delight, Dumbledore approached her warily.

"Greeting wizard, I am Nimue..." She replied with a soft lilting voice. "I do not believe you have heard of me. But I have heard of you..." She smiled with a soft knowing look. Her green eyes flashing, it takes but a moment to see whom she resembles. But at his hopeful look she shakes her head and giggles.

"As much as I would I like to be sometimes I am not...the best term to categorize what I would be to him, would more or less be a grandmother, just without the actual deed." She laughed in amusement. "I consider it a blessing that his and his mother's eyes were like mine."

"I see...why are you here?"

"Because, Fawkes asked me to come, he is after all one of my many children." The woman stated with a fond smile. "He has tried talking to you but it seems you no longer listen... And you must listen for you still have your part to play in this mess you have helped to create."

Startled by this comment, Dumbledore is about to protest this, when she holds up her hand. Immediately and without even realizing it, the old wizard finds himself held in a paralysis. One so strong even he can not break it.

"You will listen to me, old wizard." Nimue replied with a kind and yet steely voice. "Your prophecy is done. Through your and your so called Light's actions. The one you believe is still active was fulfilled seven years ago. Another has taken its place...and this is the one fate is acting out now."

"That's not true. Both Harry and Voldemort are still very much alive." Dumbledore stated as she unfroze him with a wave of her hand.

"You are such a foolish old wizard..." She stated softly and with narrow eyes. "You forgot the most basic fact when it comes to prophecies."

"Which is...?"

"There is always more than one meaning..." She responded with a knowing smile as she bent down. With that said the woman croons a song of farewell to Fawkes before looking at Dumbledore with a sad and yet disappointing gaze. "The battle should be ending soon..." She replies thoughtfully as if listening to something. "I must go..."

Her statement in his mind, the woman disappears in a flash fire, similar to that of Fawkes. Said creature looking at him, Albus feels now what he has denied for so long. The disappointing feeling that belongs solely to Fawkes...

Shame on his elderly features, Albus approaches the phoenix... "Was she right?" He whispered quietly. "Is the prophecy already fulfilled?"

Knowing that his friend for many years was hoping that he would shake his head no, the bird looks at him sadly and nods his head yes. Taking a chance, he sang a song that reached out on the link wizard and familiar share...

Death does not always mean loss of life.

Collapsing to his chair, Albus just clutched his head in his hands as if in sorrow. The only thing he kept saying over and over as the memories of these last seven years hit him was four simple words.

"What have I done?" He uttered forlornly. "There is nothing left to fight with..."

Fawkes said nothing and just sang a song of reassurance. But unlike before this time, the bird gave his bonded four words, which Albus heard loud and clear. Ones that caused him to pause in his misery and confusion...

There is always hope...

-8-

Back at Diagon Alley...

Harry was running towards the main battle. The wolves already having gotten McNair before it all started, Harry was aiming for the one person he had hated for ruining his life at the end of his fifth year. For costing him his godfather...

Bellatrix LeStrange...

Hearing her shout for him to be found, Harry had all but forgotten the other death eaters as he aided those who couldn't find out. She was one of the ones at the top of his list to deserve whatever punishment he could give her.

Whirling around and stunning people left and right, he paid no notice to the shock of his appearance on their features. He never realized

that it was taking him less and less time to cast his spells or that he was humming a song.

His cloak now had flames at the end of the emerald silk, but they did not burn, they simply lived.

If one was to see Harry now, they would realize his phoenix magic as a result of it being his Animagus form was coming on line.

Harry's power was growing...

-8-

Okay I admit I like this chapter better heh heh...

Don't worry there is a part 3...after all Harry has to meet up with dear Bella does he not?

Chapter 41

Appearance 3

Harry's cloak flamed out behind him as he ran. The song he was humming without really knowing it caused the flames to burn brighter. Flames that began to take on a life of its own, the song Harry was humming turned into a full blown song in a language he does not know nor realize he is speaking.

The fire, reaching out touches the dementors, and with a shriek the creatures of darkness that could only be stopped with a patronus turned to ash. Death Eaters that it touched, did not die, but felt the pain of all the victims that they themselves had created in their lifetime.

Many fights stopped as they flames touched the combatants. Flames that made those think and cry in shame at what they had done. For those that were good, the flame touched, they felt stronger and a renewed sense of strength coming from within. The song Harry sings spreading through their souls, the light growing brighter against the darkness.

Hope was spreading...

Observing this happening to her fellow death eaters, Bellatrix Black shrieked in rage. This was not how the battle was supposed to go. The light is not supposed to be winning! It was at that moment, that she spies that pure flame coming for her. Dreading its touch upon her, as companions have gone into screaming fits with its touch, she barely manages to avoid it.

Allowing it to grasp firmly onto another...

She watched as Marcus Flint, fell to the flame. His eyes crossing as memories of men, women, and children alike overcome him. Their pain and cries for mercy that he ignored hitting him for all their worth, Marcus lets out a scream to rival even the worst of victims that Bella herself had created.

Despite being strong and a loyal believer, Bellatrix was terrified.

At that precise moment, she was caught off guard as an Expillermus spell hit her hard and fast. Thrust into the brick wall of Fortescue's beside her, Bella was up and ready for battle when she faced green eyes filled with rage.

"Why if it isn't Potter..." She crooned out in a delightful tone. The events around her forgotten about in her desire for battle, Bellatrix does not notice the flames flickering around the green cloaked man. Flames that bid their time...

"Hello Bella...how is dear Tom." Harry stated with an almost cool and arrogant quality. Those were tones that do not match his eyes, as he grasps his wand. They do not reflect his stance either as he takes a position that as the Wolves observe from their own places in the alley.

Reminds them much of Alexandre...

They knew a battle was coming. Amongst themselves and Remus, you can almost hear the sounds of bets being made. The wolves knew that their leader had trained the youth well, in fact as Harry listened, he had to resist from smirking as Remus berated them for betting on his life.

The wolves stopping all mentions of bets, give their leader a cheeky apology over the magic which gives Harry a huge smile of happiness. Despite what he must do, the Wolves were telling him that no matter what he does...

He will always be accepted by them.

"STOP SMILING!"

Grinning even wider, as the wolves laugh in response to her cries, Harry dodges with that same primal ease that is associated with the shifters. Not once has he fired a single spell towards the insane woman, who grows angrier with each and every minute. Her spells

becoming more dangerous, more erratic, Bella was taking out her own people without a care in the world save one.

She must kill this Harry Potter...her dark lord demanded nothing less than death.

Finally screaming out an Aveda Kadavra, Bella smirked as it made a beeline straight for Harry. This time it would hit rather than bounce off someone else. Watching as he smiled though, the woman paled only seconds later as a bright flame erupted all around him. From red to blue, to a brilliant white in seconds, the fire absorbed the energy of the unforgivable and pulsed with eager anticipation.

As it vanished again, Bella could see Potter with an almost amused glance on his features. "Well now...despite what just happened, I do believe it is my turn." Grinning with a wolfish kind of glee, Harry moved. His eyes taking on an animalistic gleam, Bella began to run. Something told her if she did not...she would never see the light of day again.

-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-

That is when time seemed to stop in Diagon Alley. For at the moment she started wolves began to howl, as a hunt in their eyes had begun. Even Remus was affected by that lone foolish maneuver of the madwoman's and he had already started to shift. The same going for the other wolves, thus causing wizards and witches alike to huddle close together in fear...

Even Hermione and Ron were deathly afraid of what was going on and stopped going after their friend. Having been caught in a battle alongside another auror taking on two Death eaters at the same time, they had been busy watching the young auror's back as she did her best against those far more experienced than she was.

They all watched as lupine shapes in the shadows went towards where Harry had gone, gone to where a known madwoman had been.

The howls continuing all around them, they shiver once more in fear. "Something tells me Hermione, I would not want to be whoever it was they are after when he or she is found." Ron whispered shakily.

Hermione said nothing and just nodded her head. For once Ron was right...

-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-

Bella ran like the hounds of hell were after her. Not since...well not since ever has she been afraid of whatever fate has been chosen for her end. She knew she would die in her lord's service to which the woman was proud.

But never had she thought it would be like this...

Running down alleys to find the nearest apparition point or break in the barriers, she was getting frustrated as dead end after dead end emerged. Finally a break in sight, the woman went for, only to find three wolves blocking her path.

Emitting an aura to rival that of her lord, the one in the center growled low and licked its chops as if it was waiting. Silver of color, she found herself backing up immediately, almost wishing that Greyback had come instead of choosing to guard their Lord along with his pack.

"They wish to hunt you Bella, so now you have a choice, to continue running and be ripped to shreds by them. Or to fight and battle me in a duel..." A hated voice said from behind her. Whirling with her wand out, she is already throwing out an incendio spell towards that arrogant brat.

Harry avoids it with ease and fires off one of his own. The woman barely managing to escape it, she grows angry as the smell of burnt hair fills her nose. Her hand reaching up, as she expects to find the long dark silky locks, she finds it shorn close to her head. Nothing but ash on one side is all that remains of her hair.

And like any woman, Bellatrix LeStrange was indeed full of vanity.

This destruction of something as mundane as her hair had set her off into a full blown mess. Her hair or what's left of it floats around like a cloud, while she sends spell after spell towards the youth that had been a bane of her existence.

Ducking left and right as he sent his own back at her, she realized that not once has he sent a killing spell at her.

"What's the matter Potter...can't kill me? Don't have the stomach for it?" She taunted. "No desire...no revenge." She laughed with an insane cackle. "And these people betrayed you. Betrayed their precious hero...do they not deserve to die."

But instead of responding to her taunts, Potter smiled. "I do not kill Bella...despite where your precious Tom, made this people believe or think of me. I do not kill, nor will I ever if I have to. As to whether or not these people deserve to die. No...despite what they did to me, they do not." Harry intoned quietly. His words reaching the people around him, a deep kind of shame was now in the atmosphere of Diagon alley.

It was a kind of shame that years later, many would still feel as they walked into the busy shopping district. A reminder to them all that sometimes just because someone is judged guilty...does not necessarily mean they were.

"But nor will I no longer save them from themselves if they continue to put all their faith in me when they can fight just as good. Have you not noticed Bella...many of your precious allies are how shall we say...indisposed?" Harry told her. His voice mimicking the dark lord's to perfection, her ire only increased along with her hatred.

Looking around though, she finds that she is indeed alone. Many of her companions were unconscious or tied up. In rage and upset it was at that moment the flames from Harry's fire struck. Wrapping around her like a lover's embrace, Bellatrix began to feel the pain and the anguish of the hundreds of victims she had created. The song of the light humming through the darkness of her soul, she endeavored to escape within her own mind. But even there the light struck and drove her into its judging embrace.

She screamed, she screamed long and hard...

Eventually she stopped...

The woman remained alive, but if one was to look in her eyes. No one was home. You see Bella was now locked by the flames of the Phoenix into a never ending nightmare. One where she became every single one of her victims...

The song humming all around, the people watch as the wolves shift once more and gather around Harry. The men and women laughing with amusement, some look at Bella who lies there shaking with fear and agony from time to time. All this done, Remus looks at his cubling and smiles...

"Sirius and your parents would be proud of you Harry." Remus stated as the Wolves agreed. Although they had been expecting Harry to kill her in the end, they two were proud of him. Whatever he had done, their beasts knew by the screams that it was a definitive win.

He had risen in pride status in their eyes.

All of a sudden a gentle and yet loud rumbling sound filled air. Harry, already having forgotten alongside many others of the events they have just participated in, looks at them with sheepishness as they gaze at him with smiles.

"What...I'm hungry." The young man replied with chagrin. "Dueling of any kind always makes me hungry."

"Definitely picked that up from Alexandre..." Marcus chirped.

Annabelle giggling beside her beloved mate, the two wolves link arms with Harry and quiz him about food in London and whether or not it was different from what is found in Paris.

The others following close behind, Remus smiles warmly at the acceptance Harry has received from these young men and women.

But that smile disappears as two who were once his closest friends approach.

A mixture of longing, fear...and envy on their faces.

"You lied to us..." Hermione said softly as she gazed at a favorite former teacher. "He did contact you..."

"No...I contacted him." Remus stated quietly. His brown eyes speckled with amber, the wolf turned to look at his cublings former pride mates with pity. "He has allowed me to stay close to him because out of everyone he knew. I was the only one who tried to save him years ago."

"But..."

"Don't try to find him as he asked, you to...he is not the same boy he once was."

Those words hitting close to home in their hearts, Ron and Hermione allow the older man to walk away their guilt at what he had said resonating within them. After all it was true, despite their close friendship that they once had or even the belief in his guilt. Harry was their friend...

And not once did they try to save his sanity in Azkaban...

So as reinforcements finally started to arrive once the barriers came down. They stayed behind to help them clean up. Their thoughts in conflict over Remus's words and their own personal desires...

Both of which concern the same dark haired youth whom along with several wolves. Was on his way home to a certain blonde young woman waiting for him...

-8-

Godric's Hollow

To say that Gabrielle Delacourt and Nymphadora Tonks were mad at this moment would be an understatement to say the least. They were more or less downright furious.

They had awoken this morning to find the doors locked and warded much to the surprise of themselves as well as Fleur who was staying in a room next door to her sister's. The older Veela admittedly understood why both Remus and Harry had done what they did to these two women. But she didn't have to like it...

So as they returned home, she hastily beat a retreat along with the wolves who knew that by the fact that Gabrielle was ranting in French and that Tonks hair was the deep scarlet red of anger. That if they stuck around to protect them, that they themselves would be missing a few vital parts.

Allowing Fleur to close the doors behind them, that's when items as well as hexes started flying.

"Gabrielle put that down! Let me explain!"

"Comment avez-vous osé m'enfermer là-dedans, idiot!" The blonde shouted in anger. "Espèce d'abruti arrogant impoli"

Understanding her words, as he had picked up some French during his stay, Harry glared back at her as her blue eyes stared him down ferociously. Taking a risk, the blonde gives a shout of surprise as he leaps from his position and tackles her to the ground. Forcing her to drop the vase that she was intending to throw next...

Immediately a wrestling match was started as despite being smaller and petite. Gabrielle could be quite tenacious and vicious when pissed...

As this was happening Tonks was hexing Remus like you wouldn't believe. Being an auror apparently was a boon at this moment in the older women's opinion. Especially as between she and Remus there were in an infinite amount of spells that they could throw before they were done.

Godric's Hollow was lucky that as it was being rebuilt, Remus had the foresight to cast self repair charms on its very foundations and walls.

So far, Tonks has nailed him twice and has made holes in the wall the size of his head. The wolves gulping in fear, the men look at one another and pray for those being punished manhood as the women cheer on Tonks and Gabrielle. They didn't dare break in as the walls repaired themselves. Knowing that the damage the two angry women were inflicting had to be great...

Eventually as the war of the sexes dies down three hours later, in that one lone room. The others were confused as they heard thumps from above them seconds later. Youthful laughter in the air, Fleur couldn't help but smile as she recognized that giggle and that soft cry of Harry.

It was further influenced as to what was happening as a deep throated growl of pleasure came from the room next door and the clear voice of Remus filled the air.

"Clothes off now!"

Needless to say the basic rule of thumb in any major fight with a wolf or even one raised by a wolf no matter how briefly, a woman should remember often is this.

It turns them on...

-8-

Gabrielle's words

How dare you lock me in you idiot! You rude arrogant ass!

Depending on how things go I may or may not do a lemon...but either way I have an inkling I am going to have to change the rating shortly anyhow. Heh...

Chapter 42

Thoughts...

Curled up in his bed, with Gabrielle tucked into him, Harry savored the feel of her body against his. Their fingers clasped together, the youth can not help but marvel at the contrast between her pale skin and that of his darkly tanned one.

"Penny for your thoughts Harry?" Her voice said softly and with a hint of satisfaction. Although both were slightly bruised and battered from their 'fight', what had happened after ward was far more pleasurable.

They had made love...

Harry's kisses upon her body were so sweet and so tender upon her skin. He had nipped and tasted of her flesh as she did his and in doing so, they both discovered places that felt so good. That they had to have more of that feeling, that immense want of each other...

"Wishing I didn't have to fight..." He murmured softly. His fingers grasping her hand gently and yet tightly within his own. She knew he was upset, about having to return. "Wishing I could have just stayed here with you..."

Turning her head around only slightly, Gabrielle looks into Harry's green eyes with a gentle gaze of love in her heart. Her free hand touching his cheek, she lifts up to kiss him softly and with all the passion in her soul. "I know Harry; it is what I want to. But you know as well as I that you would have gone regardless."

"And that is what bothers me. Everything they did, everything they accused me of. I should have left them to rot!" He muttered as he buried his nose in the sweet smelling scent of her hair. Lying back down flat on his back, moments later, Gabrielle turns around and drapes an arm across his chest.

A quizzical look on her features, he tells her of the fight in Diagon Alley. He tells her of what he had accomplished and the pain of

seeing old friends again. Listening to him as he speaks, Gabrielle hears the pain and sadness in his voice as well as the confusion.

It does not take long after he is done speaking, for the young veela woman to feel his hand in her hair. Running through it, as if taking comfort from its silkiness... "It bothers you that you saved them? That you saved Ron and Hermione yes" She said quietly. "I do not think that is what it is...I think something else does."

Pausing in mid stroke, Harry is startled by her statement. "What do you mean?"

Turning to rest her chin on his chest, Gabrielle looks up at him through the loose strands of her hair. "I do not think it bothers you that you saved them Harry. I think what bothers you is despite everything you want them back..."

"I don't...I don't want them back. I'm happy with you, Fleur, Alexandre, Isabelle, Remus and everyone else. I don't need them..."

"I think you protest too much Harry." The young woman said with a soft and gentle smile. "And you do need them. They were with you in those events you had told me and Fleur about in your past. They were part of the reason why you had been able to do what you did and survive."

Thoughtful and thinking, Harry just held her closer now. The love she emanates seeps through her to his cold body to heat it up with her warm soulful presence. "What do I do?"

"I don't know Harry..." She whispered softly as she laid her head back down upon his chest. "I just know sooner or later, whether you want to or not, you will go see them. Because you need to...you need to for a part of you believes without them, you will not survive."

Holding her tightly, Harry to get rid of these dark thoughts, flips them over as something far happier comes to mind. Giving a shriek of surprise, the young woman looks up to find the love of her life looking down at her with complete adoration... "Harry?"

“What would I do without you Gabrielle?”

“Go absolutely no where...” The blonde replied cheekily and much to the amusement of both herself and Harry. Laughter is coming forth now from her lips, as his only response to her statement was to tickle her. His fingers skimming the sides of her belly, it only increased her laughter.

But soon that laughter turned to something else as it changed from that to a pleasurable moan. One that is answered, as he is pulled down for a kiss of need and wants...

-8-

Despite his age, Tonks loves the fact that being a werewolf has a benefit upon Remus that she most definitely likes. Who would have thought that her shy professor could be such a wild one when it came to well...when it came to what they had just done?

Not to mention to a degree what they were still doing.

“Again?” She giggled as he was busy kissing up her belly. Nipping at her flesh, she giggles as he growls and nods his head in affirmative.

Thank god for the stamina of a werewolf! She is going to be so sore tomorrow. Incredibly happy...but sore!

-8-

Okay there is a reason why this one is short.

The reason is this; this is what I call a special chapter. It is expandable into a lemon. And don't worry folks my specialty when it comes to writing is actually lemons. Ask any one of my regular reviewers, I STILL get email and letters from grateful loved ones for turning their significant others into sex-crazed maniacs.

Foreplay and Noodle Delights are two prime examples of my lemon skills. You can access both by clicking on my name and looking for the completed story listing.

I am currently working on the next chapter which has to deal with other issues in the story, concerning Harry and the order as already written above. But some of you have been asking me for some Harry/Gabrielle moments.

So considering I am about to approach 500 plus reviews as well as in other stats consider this my gift to you as a way of saying thanks for sticking with me as I had taken over. An option where you all can decide, do I expand or leave it as is?

Chapter 43

The Order...

It has been two weeks since the attack on Diagon Alley, and all attacks have seemingly stopped for right now. According to Severus Snape, Voldemort was still furious over the loss of not only McNair, but also of Bellatrix LeStrange. Considering she was his right hand woman, it was a severe blow to the darkness as well as a boon for the light.

Still it was all because of one young man...Harry Potter.

It was the thoughts of his once former student, which had led him to this meeting. Because other than thinking of the dark haired youth. He was also thinking of what the woman had told him. This Nimue...

There is always more than one meaning...

This had led him to think and to do research on the prophecy. His desire to return everything to the way it was, he wanted desperately to prove her wrong. To prove that Harry was the only one you can set them all free. That only with the death of Voldemort could the Wizarding world be set right once more.

Already many had returned from hiding as word, of Harry's return had spread. The Ministry was begging Harry to come forward to offer their apologies for his treatment at the hands of Fudge and his yes men.

But nothing had drawn him out. Hence why he had called the meeting...

When the battle for Diagon Alley was over and done with, he had apparated in despite the distance, desperately hoping that Harry was still there. Wanting to see the youth whom had often come to him for advice or simply just to talk while in attendance. Like Severus before him, Harry had become to a degree a part of Albus's family.

A family that was broken with the guilt of betrayal...

Guilt such a small world for a powerful thing...

Ever since his return had been confirmed by Ron and Hermione, it was also confirmed by the Ministry and the papers for as chance would have it. One familiar and practically a stalker in most of the Order's opinion, reporter Rita Skeeter had hid to report on the battle.

By chance she had seen and taken a picture of the World's hero and greedily auctioned it along with her story to the highest bidder. So now the world knew and many speculated...

How did he survive?

So lost in his thoughts, people began to appear in the Great Hall of Hogwarts by Floo. Because of having so many members nowadays, Grimmauld Place, despite Harry's supposed death had been shut down and the headquarters moved to the school.

"Professor...do you think he will come?"

Startled by the tentative female voice, Albus looked up to find Hermione sad and thoughtful staring at him. Ron beside her, the elderly wizard just looks old to the two of them all of a sudden and as much as they hope he would say yes, he says the three words that break their hearts a little more.

"I don't know..."

"I see...Remus and Tonks haven't contacted you either have they?"

Shaking his head, Albus gave a pained sigh as he looks away from the two hopeful gazes. After that battle in Diagon Alley, they had both reported that Remus had essentially admitted that he and Harry were reunited. That had made Albus visibly upset and not to mention envious over the closeness to the young man that Remus now instead of him.

Watching now as his two brightest and best students from Harry's time move to take their own seats, Dumbledore watches as one by

one the Order members arrive. Hoping beyond hope that one in particular would come. He waits...

In the end, he as well as several of the others, primarily the Weaselys who are sorrowful and depressed that once again he has not appeared for them. And now at the moment, nor do they have Remus or Tonks to ask, with the revelation that Remus was now in the company of Harry. It only goes to assume that so was the pretty metamorphagus.

The meeting underway, it all goes smoothly until Albus talks of his visit from the woman. Speaking of what she had said and never revealing her name, he tells of what she had spoken. And that is when the uproar begins...

"How can that be?"

"The Prophecy can't have already been fulfilled Albus!"

"Voldemort's not dead!"

Cries and cries of that alike, it is Hermione, thoughtful as she knows of the prophecy as well, who starts thinking. While a majority of the order protests, and debates this with Albus, none of them notice the quiet appearance of three who have come. Running late due to an event that had made them laugh and smile...they had come to the meeting. Intent on not only listening...

But to tell them of what someone they all care about desires.

"No it is possible..." Hermione said sadly as she spoke up. The others not listening save Ron, the youngest of the Weasely men stands up and yells loud and clearly. "SHUT UP!"

An amused chuckle from the three in the shadows, they continue to listen as Ron turns to allow Hermione to speak. "Repeat that again..."

Nodding her head, and smiling at the back up that Ron has given her, Hermione spoke up. Confidence that she has lacked for many years was starting to re-emerge once more as she speaks. "It is possible,

that the prophecy has been fulfilled. We forget that the meanings can change from belief to belief.”

Sadly, Albus nods his head in acceptance despite his smile in approval of both of them. “Death does not always mean loss of life. A close friend had told me that and it had taken me a while to understand. To the Gypsies, Death can mean a change of path...”

“But Albus in most cases Death means loss of life...” Minerva interrupted in disbelief.

“Tarot cards...” Hermione said quietly. “Although I could not stand divination, I do remember that much from what I attended. And I bet if you were to ask Professor Trelawney, she would tell you that that the Death card is not always an assumption of a loss of life. In a basic tarot deck, such as the ones the Gypsies use as the Headmaster had stated, Death means a change of path to them. Not the loss of life.”

Parvati Patil spoke up then at that moment, her face ashen as is her sisters. “Hermione is right Professor McGonagall.” The young woman said in shock. Her sister beside her, the two were clutching on to one another in disbelief.

Padma who is now speaking nods her head in agreement as well. “She is right, and in our religion Death does mean loss of life, but it can also mean changing your path. When the only way you have open to you stops, your path is dead. Effectively killed as you can go no further, thus a new path is opened and you take that one instead.”

“But it’s fate... Harry must fight Voldemort.”

“Actually he doesn’t...” Came a voice from behind them all, a voice that belongs to one Nymphadora Tonks. The woman stepping forward now is accompanied by Remus Lupin, and by a woman that Bill Weasley knows all too well.

“Fleur...”

The discussion forgotten, at the appearance of this man and his two companions, exclamations and questions shoot towards them faster

then they could blink. Remaining and silent and not answering a single one, it is Dumbledore this time who speaks.

“SILENCE!”

The fact that Dumbledore had to scream it with aide from his wand made many a wizard sit back down. Tonks, Remus and Fleur remain standing though. The latter laughing over something they are sharing with one another. It matters not as all eyes focus on Tonks, who begins to speak.

Sharing with them all what Isabelle had told her in that discussion long ago, one by one the Order sinks in defeat. Even Albus pales at her words, words that before would not have been believed. But since the visit of Nimue...were now more then ever sounding truer by the minute.

“It...it can’t be true?” Molly Weasely protested.

“It makes sense though.” Ron said quietly. “It’s a strategy I never would have thought of.”

“Or I...” Moody stated with a deep regret. “Voldemort played us like puppets...killing the path that was set before Harry and destroying him through us without having to lift a finger.”

“Then...this...the prophecy has been fulfilled...and we lost?” Hestia Jones said with tears in her eyes. The need to be told that there was still hope was evident in not just her gaze but many.

“The prophecy has been fulfilled but all is not lost...” Remus said quietly and with a gentle smile. This time, he speaks now and as he passes Tonks his features shifts for a second to deliver a Wolfish look of delight that makes the auror, turn her hair all colors of the rainbow with pleasure.

Placing a small round ball upon the table, they all hear the voice of a young woman speaking...

Blessed by Nimue

One shall rise

Protected by the wolfen pride

Never a child but an adult first

Allowed to be a child again

And then an adult at last

Hope is the Phoenix that is and isn't

For Darkness shall fall before it

Confused to say the least, everyone is puzzled by these words. Albus paling as it was a woman named Nimue who had spoken with him. Making him think...and like many of the others he especially had questions concerning who Nimue was...

"This is one of two that we believe active Albus, which concern Harry in someway." Remus said quietly. "This one both he and I feel is the one related to Voldemort."

"What makes you believe this one?"

Stepping forward this time it is Fleur who poses the words without missing a beat. "When I had first spoken to Harry concerning something I had seen. What had allowed him to live reminded me of something I and my sister had read. I had asked him and was surprised to find a misconception here in Britain concerning what had happened to Merlin..."

"Misconception?" Hermione stated in confusion. "Everyone knows Merlin was trapped and kept from Arthur those last days by Arthur's sister Morgan Le Fey.

"To a degree that is true." Fleur smiled as she brought out a single book. Handing it to Hermione, as Harry had warned the older woman that Hermione would indeed protest what she is about to say. "But it

was not Morgan Le Fay...it was someone else who trapped him. If you do not believe me, this is an obscure line from the known copies of her diary.”

All protesting her words, saying that the Veela is wrong, Hermione finds pages that Fleur had marked. Waiting for the furor to die down, she begins to read aloud...

She came to me for aide in trapping Merlin. I of course turned her down directly in interfering. Unlike my sister, who had interfered and created that abomination of a nephew Mordred out of vengeance. I will not step in to the fates of others. In that rule I believe Merlin is correct... However indirectly I might, for I have seen what is to come and I must prepare. Camelot is ending and if Merlin interferes in trying to save it...it won't be pretty

“I don't understand?” Several voices spoke up in one form or another.

“How many sisters does Arthur have in your opinion?” Fleur asked softly.

“One...everyone knows that.” Stated Shacklebolt with a puzzled expression, but it is cleared as Minerva speaks this time. Being a teacher of her caliber, she had caught on to what was written...

“She is speaking of two different women beside herself.” The older woman responded in surprise. Fleur smiling nods her head, in approval of the woman who has listened as well as a few others who were explaining to those confused. “Arthur had three sisters from his mother's side. One of which we know little about, according to records on the mainland and among the stories I know is that it was his eldest sister Morgana who gave birth to Mordred not Morgan.”

“What does all this have to do with Merlin and with Harry though?” Someone asked with a confused tone of their voice.

“In stories that I know concerning Merlin, it was not Morgan who trapped him but a Fae witch. One who had desired his magic and was intent on seducing him to get it. She would often appear to him in

the form of a bird... before shifting into her normal form.” Fleur replied as she brought out a scroll.

This time containing a single image of the man known to be Merlin, beside him as he appears to be slumbering is a woman who appears to be leaping in from the figure of a bright scarlet bird upon the windowsill.

Enlarging it for all to see, Fleur looks at the faces that are startled by the picture of a slumbering wizard and the woman sneaking in. “Everyone...this is Nimue. It was not Morgana who trapped him although she provided the spell. It was Nimue who had done it...”

Now words of the prophecy they had just heard hit them all. “Harry...Harry is this one blessed by Nimue...” Hermione whispered. Remus nodding his head, links arms with both Tonks and Fleur and starts to leave. “Indeed and it is because of that blessing that Harry is alive...”

“What do you mean?”

“Nimue is a phoenix...she’s a phoenix Animagus.” Albus worded in shock. Her surprising reference to referring to Fawkes as one of her children has come forth. And with that memory entering his mind combined with the image of the scarlet bird he put two and two together... “Harry is one as well isn’t he?”

“Yes.” Fleur said softly. “We know it should be impossible, but Harry is a phoenix Animagus.”

“Harry was that phoenix with you those two times...” Albus stated with a matter of fact tone to his voice as he turns to Remus. “How...how did you find him?”

“Yes” Remus replied quietly. “And as to how I found him Albus...Arabella was right.”

Leaving that said, the three walk out of the great hall as said woman looks almost smug as she a mere squib had been the first to see Harry in so long. As the order explodes with discussions concerning

recent information, no one notices the two chasing after the three who just left with another hot on their heels.

-8-

I think I did pretty good...

Chapter 44

Changes

To say that a change was coming would be true. To say that it would be easy on the other hand is not. Hearing the footsteps racing behind them, Remus looks to his two lady companions. One of which he and Moony adores with all their heart, as the other has proven herself to be a close and trustworthy friend.

So finding a comfortable place to wait, they sit down and once again look over pictures in their hands. It was only a few minutes into the laughter and the memories that Ron and Hermione had showed up with Bill only seconds behind them.

Looking at them all, the first thing asked is simply a question that Remus will not readily answer.

“Where’s Harry?”

“He is nowhere you need to worry about.” The wolf replied. “He is safe.”

The two women still gushing over the pictures, Fleur finds herself strained not to look up into the deep hazel eyes of Bill Weasley, as she and Tonks both listen to the conversation. The older of two red headed men was standing beside his brother, but looking at her more then he was at her friends. How she wished to go to him...but her pride as a Veela demanded that he make the first move.

Still as she looks towards the others, alongside Tonks, the two women see that Ron was struggling with Hermione as they argue amongst themselves. Considering the younger woman was desperate to quiz or better yet to almost demand that they be allowed to see Harry, the both decided to step in now.

“Why do you wish to see him so much?” Fleur asked with a curious tone. “And do not say it is to simply fight Voldemort. By now you understand that he does not have to...”

At a loss for words, Hermione looked somewhat abashed, as new prophecy or not, it is hard to forget old wants. Or even old desires... still it is Ron who looks at Fleur, with a calm and steady gaze.

"Because I miss him..." Ron said with a sadness and regret. "I miss my friend, I miss the guy I could confide in, I miss Harry..."

A gentle smile crossing the features of the all three adults who protect the young man, it is Tonks who responds now. Although still not at the same level of trust and friendship that she once had with him even if only briefly, Tonks now understood some of what Harry had gone through.

Thanks to not only Remus, but also Harry himself after that first month of training.

"That's a good answer Ron..." Tonks stated with a cheerful and yet serious look. "But you do realize he has changed, he is not the same Harry he once was."

"I am not the same Ron either." The younger of the two Weaselys responded. "I really can't explain it."

"You don't need to Ron." Remus quietly replied. A small smile crossed the wolf's lips as he gazed at his adopted godson's childhood friend. "Because you are right, none of you are that same as you were years ago."

Ron looks at Remus after he had said that and nods his head. "Harry has endured Azkaban because of things that we did...and we did not visit him or try to save him. As much as I hope he doesn't...I would not blame him if he hated us."

"He does not hate you." The blonde responded with a kind gaze. "He feels he should, but he does not. A part of him still needs you...the both of you to help him in his battles. It is why he has forgiven all of you long ago."

"If he has forgiven us...why does he not come to see us?" Hermione shouted. Upset and lonely at the loss of not only Harry once again,

who remains out of reach. But amazed at the wisdom that Ron is displaying in his words...

Before she never would have expected this from him, but now...

"Because there is a clear difference between forgiving..." Tonks replied only to have Ron finish it for her in quiet and yet pained understanding.

"And forgetting..."

"Yes..." Fleur said softly. "It is why he saved you, remember? It is how he said. Because of the past that we once had..."

"He still remembers the good times then." Ron said with a smile of true happiness. "Tell him...tell him I remember them to."

"He does Ron Weasley and I will." Fleur replied with a warm look. "He tells my sister much of your times together. She helps him... you know."

Confused and yet thoughtful, the two younger adults remain quiet and only talk amongst themselves as they step to the side. This is when Bill comes forward, his eyes focused solely on the Veela woman, Fleur looks to Remus and Tonks. The pair of which are already moving away in quiet understanding...

"You...you look good Fleur."

"So do you Bill."

To say that things were uncomfortable at this moment...would be putting things mildly. Bill was just staring at her, not knowing what to say, and Fleur...all she wanted to do was run. Nevertheless, it mattered not for as she stood up to stretch something else happened, he spoke finally...

"Don't go..." He whispered. "Don't go again..."

"Bill..."

"I'm sorry...I'm sorry I should have listened to you." The red head stated with a quiet hunger. "I was wrong."

"Thank you..." Fleur smiled gently in response.

"May I ask how you knew?" He whispered.

Nodding her head, Fleur explains about the Veela sense of magic. How they as a whole can sense when a magic seems wrong. So in tuned to it, because of their need to keep their transformations from happening when emotional, that it allows them to sense when something is wrong.

In hopes of preventing the change...

"So you are saying that you could sense something wrong with the potions?!"

"Yes...ask any magical creature or person with a significant amount of creature blood." Fleur replied. "Even Remus could tell you, that it was a reason why he believed Harry was innocent. He could sense something was wrong."

"Why isn't this...?" Bill stated in confusion.

"Well known?"

Giving his sign of yes, Fleur was thoughtful for a moment and then gave him a sad smile. "Maybe it is because your people don't wish to know? A lot of wizards I have noticed treat Remus with disdain here, yet if you go to my country or others in Europe and the Americas, he would be treated with respect and equality." The blonde said with a wise smile.

"I admit, I have been guilty of it myself a time or two, but it is like the Muggles, Civil rights from the 1960's in America. Even though you know its possible, and that he could be right, you as whole would choose not to believe him, because of what he was, not who he was."

Despite her confusing him at first, Bill understood what she meant. People chose not to see the obvious, so desperate for things to remain as they are, when something that is different and shocking comes up. They refuse to believe in it. To see what it is or...what it could be.

“Are we that much behind the other Wizarding communities?”

Reluctant to really answer, all Fleur does is simply nod her head in response. A small sigh and a sound of sorrow emanating from Bill's lips, before she could realize she was doing something, the Veela had reached up to touch his cheek in a small caress.

“But all it takes is for one to make the change Bill and from that one change can grow.”

“You mean Harry right?” He replies as he savors her touch. Not really wanting to move as she might bolt, as he notices her stiffen, he remains still and quiet.

“To a degree yes... But I also mean you.” Fleur said quietly. “Now that you know can you not see yourself thinking and wanting to make things better? Not just for yourself, but others...?”

Before anything else can be said, that was the moment; a familiar snowy owl came flying towards them. Hooting in delight at the sight of Remus, Hedwig glided down to land gently on his shoulder.

“HEDWIG!”

Giving a startled hoot, the owl glared at the others for scaring her, before she could deliver her Master's message. An amused look emanating from Remus as well as Fleur and Tonks, the others with them take on a chagrined look, before shaking themselves free of that emotion.

“She escaped when she heard Harry's call for her. She really is his familiar.” Remus smiled as he spoke. Reaching for the message that the gentle owl has attached to her leg, Tonks showers her with attention, as he reads.

Amusement crossing the wolf's features, he shows the missive to Fleur and Tonks who both giggle in amusement as well as annoyance...

"What is it?" Ron asked. Desperate to know as only one person could have sent the message through this ever loyal owl, he hopes it is something that brings him closer to his once best friend.

"My fellow wolves are being mischievous back at home..." Remus replied as he struggled not to laugh. "Not to mention a little drunk..."

"Come on Wolfman..." Tonks stated with affection as Remus nips at her nose while she pulls him up. You are unofficially their Alpha with Alexandre away. We better stop them from making themselves a nuisance before Harry or even Gabrielle hexes them to death. After all they are enjoying their new status of sorts. After all he did ask her the big question..."

This statement is what was causing Ron, Bill, and Hermione to pause in shock as they take it in. Another reason that they had hoped Harry would come back, was that perhaps Ginny would return... The red head till the day she had vanished had been very much in love with Harry. And up until that fateful day, the dark haired boy, had slowly but surely been starting to return those feelings...

"Harry is getting married?"

"Yes..." Fleur said happily, as it had given her an excuse to not think of Bill and the issues they have between each other. Although he had come to apologize, it has been a long time... Taking the stack of pictures from Remus, the blonde flips through them, finding one she likes, she copies it and hands over one to Ron.

Taking it from her, it is almost snatched by Hermione, but considering her was the one in between herself and Bill. It only made sense that he holds on to it.

In the picture, much similar to one Harry once had of his parents in his photo album. He was twirling the blonde who was laughing and

amused. Pausing only to take her hand within his own and to show the people staring the sight of the gold ring with the diamond and emerald sharing a heart shaped cut.

“He and my sister have set the date for three months from now. Maybe with time...I can ask him to invite you.” She said softly.

With that said, Remus allows both women to take his arms and the three of them disappear. Bill, for the first time, as well as Ron was smiling in a way that they haven't in years. It is to Hermione who although she is happy for her once best friend from so long ago, there was a secret she has kept from the Weaselys for a long time.

She knows that one Ginny Weasely is a death eater. She also knows why.

And that news of Harry marrying someone else would and could possibly destroy her. For despite her reasons...Ginny was still madly in love with Harry James Potter.

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Whistles as she knows she's gonna get hit with questions, she holds a sign that says three words.

I AIN'T TELLING!

Chapter 45

Spreading the News

Interlude

Unfortunately much like the Death Eaters and Voldemort, the Order members wound up spreading the news and the theory that night. Not all had taken the oath, some had always been meant to do so, but there were those who simply never had the time to give it to be taken.

After all they had a world to save...

Like wildfire it hit the Wizarding world and the disbelief as well as the protests spread.

Some grew angry at themselves or at others. Blaming them for the life they live now. Those like Seamus Finnegan. He was one of the first to believe what was said about Harry and he had done it with the same ease as he had during the incident at the Tri-wizard Tournament.

And it was all thanks to his mother.

Despite everything that had happened between them in fifth year. The fighting and the becoming friends once more, but once again he listened to his mother who like most believed what they read rather than question. Against his better judgment, because said belief proved her wrong before, he condemned the youth to something he was claiming he did not do.

But many thought did.

In the end, when everything came to the forefront, the truth, the lies, and the cover ups. Seamus looked at his mother with a coldness that had melted her soul and her heart. There was a terrible fight that day between the mother and son, all over the fact that in her thoughts if a paper said it...it must be true. But then like many a politician muggle

and wizard alike have stated at least once, it is the victors who write what they believe.

Reminding her of the so called lies and rumors spread about Harry from his fifth year that she so foolishly believed in. Lies that she ranted about for days after Fudge had admitted the return of that so called Voldemort, now with the news of what the Order has discovered.

She has more or less lost her son, and not only that, she understands now. She allowed herself to be manipulated, to be tricked by words of a bias person. She was always one to believe that there was always some measure of truth in someone's word.

Not once did she think that the reverse could be true as well.

Mrs. Finnegan was the first of many as word spread. When it started to reach the ears of the Ministry, those people who were once Fudge's lackeys groan as somehow they know if they were to appear. The attacks upon themselves from the light and dark will start again. After all, he was the biggest contributor to the hell that was these last few years.

So eager to hold on, so eager to hold that farce of a trial that they know about.

They themselves turned on Fudge's one last and only supporter, Dolores Umbridge. There was not a day that woman, did not make their lives miserable in her demands. Luckily one was smart enough, wise enough actually to approach Percy Weasley as he was leaving the Minister's office. The older red head, who was tired, had listened and knew what to do.

Being the one in charge of everyone who is loyal to Scrimgeour, he was the voice of the Minister when he was busy discussing defense and could not meet every need. And he also knows that as much as Rufus wished to do more, the older man found himself being thwarted at every turn by this woman who still held some power over the others in his own government.

They had been waiting for an excuse to get rid of her. And taking a clue from the muggles, Percy was happy to have recently gotten a law about the workplace. One that states...

If for any reason said witch or wizard is contributing to the downfall of magic, morale, and or comfort in the workplace. And doing so repeatedly, said witch or wizard by law can be fired on the spot.

So beckoning what few aurors there were old and new alike to follow him, he did something that caused him to be very popular within moments.

“Umbridge, you’re fired.”

“You can’t do that.”

For once, Percy grinned in a way he hasn’t in a long time. It was one that would make his deceased brother Fred and younger brother George proud. It was the grin of pure Weasely pride.

“I just did.”

Things like this happened all over, for as news spread all over the light side, people felt the shame and the guilt of what they had done. Because despite all protests, the words said that night in the order made sense. Voldemort did in a sense kill Harry all those years ago, he simply used them as the tool.

Now as the news hit the Death Eaters, many began to talk amongst themselves as well. Confusion abound, they could not help but approach their leader, who was still sore about the loss of Bellatrix. In the midst of torturing Fudge, as he did not want to injure his own men to bad, he listened to what his people had told him.

To say he had stopped torturing Fudge was indeed a boon. At least it was to the former minister...

To say he had become thoughtful and contemplative...now that was something scary.

When Voldemort became quiet...people died.

So as the Dark Lord thought and worked out plans, Draco and Ginny talked of what was happening. The news that the prophecy had been fulfilled sounded off, and yet...why didn't they argue. Why didn't so many people protest?

And despite their dislike of him, even Dean Thomas had come, his own thoughts wondering on this very same subject. With the capture and subsequent torture that Bellatrix herself is being put through at the hands of Potter, the Dark Lord had entrusted more and more of the torture of innocents in Dean's hands.

After all the reputation of Voldemort must be kept strong...the people must fear what he is.

In the end and despite what they could think or say to prove him wrong. Dean had spoken and unfortunately, what he said was right.

"Figures the light are a bunch of idiots. Now that I think about it is possible what the rumors are stating. If anything it means a whole new ball game...if you pardon the saying."

"What do you mean by that?" Draco asked. Strong and confident, Draco has to keep from hiding his revulsion in front of his former classmate. What this man did to his own family years ago...

Makes his Aunt Bellatrix seem sane...

"If the rumors are true. This will only strengthen the Dark Lord. For now he will fight even harder to keep his control." Dean grinned maliciously. "But it is the rumor of this new prophecy that concerns me..."

"How so..." Ginny replied. Her voice delicate and firm as well, she does not hide her revulsion of this man.

Before he could answer though as his arms reached around to pull her against him, Ginny had given a sigh of relief as Voldemort called for his new torture master. Leaving Draco to give the message to

their 'Lord', that she had returned to her home, the young woman found herself walking out of the manor to the apparition point.

Reaching deep into the pockets of her robe, Ginny pulled out the picture she had cut from the Daily Prophet. It was the one of Harry that Rita had managed to get. Greedy to a fault there was a reason why Voldemort did not care if she joined the death eaters or not. Like Fudge, she was easily bribed with money and promises for stories that would make her a star.

Which is why he also knew that at the second the side of Light could offer her more, that vile witch would turn on them in a heartbeat.

Staring at the photo as she shakes off the memories taking over, Ginny gives it a light caress, as she sees the bright eyes and the fierce look of determination etched in his features.

"Harry..."

-8-

At that same time, one Gabrielle Delacourt sat up with a frightened expression on her face. Having been sleeping beside the man that she loved, Gabrielle reached out to touch his cheek and his lips with her fingers. Watching as he stirs himself awake, the confused and lost expression is so adorable, that she can not help but drink him in...

"Gabrielle?"

"A nightmare Harry...just a nightmare..." She whispered. Lying back down beside him, she feels the memories of that dream going away as his arms circle around her once more. Strong and loving, she feels his kiss upon her shoulder and can't help but bury herself deep into his embrace.

For then and only then she feels protected from the nightmares that are only now just beginning...and would continue until the time came for her to stop it.

If she can...

Chapter 46

Starting anew?

Harry smiled softly as he looked at his fiancée of a week now. She, Fleur, and Tonks were observing, alongside the only two wolf women. The male shifters who were busy working out some of the excess energy they were developing.

They were holding a wrestling contest... or as Tonks liked to put it, it was an excuse to help them keep in battle ready form. Just that this way it didn't feel like they were at war. But at play instead...

And as a bonus, much to the irritation of Harry and Remus, the women got to look at some handsome men while they wrestled. Their reasoning was the same most women gave all over the world, muggle and Wizarding alike. What's good for the goose...is good for the gander.

Essentially for her own safety, since she could not have one, Tonks called it an early bachelorette party for Gabrielle. Considering she was marrying Harry Potter, the others did not want the young woman going out unless necessary...much to her annoyance. Even though news of the forthcoming marriage to the hero of the Wizarding world had not spread...

They did not want to risk it. And since the wolves happily adored Harry and the two Veela sisters, they were pleased to entertain the ladies in the wrestling contest. Despite knowing it was more or less a chance for the youngest of the five to ogle them before she and Harry were finally loyal to only each other as mates should be.

They were mostly human after all.

So as this was going on, Remus had decided now was the time to approach Harry about his past friends. Sitting the youth down, he told of that discussion from the Order meeting a week ago. The one that he, Remus, and Fleur had with Ron, Hermione, and Bill...

Not wanting to listen at first, Harry found himself giving a small hint of a smile at Ron's words. Although it did not meet his eyes all the way as of yet, Remus could see the thoughts spinning and the almost hopeful look stretching across his features.

Silent though is what he remains. The thought stretching across his features, Harry is suddenly thankful for the bar, which was placed in the entertainment area. Its stock composed of muggle and Wizarding drinks alike, he picks a scotch and pours into a glass before he downs it in one gulp. The alcohol burning his throat at first, Remus is prepared for the outburst that he thinks is to follow, for that hopeful look has vanished and a pained one has taken its place..

So he is not really surprised at what is said instead.

"It doesn't matter...I don't want to see him."

"Why not?"

This time, Harry was startled as the older man asks a question that for once he can not answer. Taking this as an excuse to speak to this young man whom he loves with all his heart, Remus continues to speak.

"Harry, you can't hold on to that anger forever."

"Why not?!" Harry whirled as he started to shout. Neither man seeing the sudden whirl of the wolves, they give a small sigh and watch as Tonks halts everything for a moment to cast a silencing charm on the room the two men were in. Fleur comforting her sister along with the two female wolves, they as well as the young woman knew that this was long overdue.

They sensed their younger of the two designated leaders, has been holding back some emotional issues still. It is only because of this young woman, who had gotten him to speak and to love her that he has not burst all ready.

Hopefully she has spoken to him enough...

Now this is something that only Remus can address for unlike the others, he knows these people causing the conflict in Harry's heart almost as much as Harry does.

"Why not Remus, they abandoned me! They left me in that hell! Why should I not abandon them?"

"I don't blame you for feeling that Harry, but then I must ask you, why did you save them?" Remus asked softly. His voice never rising as much as he wishes to, he knows that this will not help the volatile young man in calming down. "You told me and Gabrielle, that you had saved Ron and Hermione that day, because of the past you shared. So if that wasn't the case...why did you save them?"

Unable to answer as he finds Remus using his own words against him, Harry narrows his eyes and says nothing. The wolf though was unaffected by that singular emerald glare and looked at the one who has become his son in all ways but blood. "Harry you have to let go of this hate. It isn't healthy..."

"I don't hate them! I just wish..." He immediately responded. The words flowing from his mouth before he could stop himself, Harry immediately slammed his lips shut. Stalking away to get himself another stiff drink, he finds himself stopped this time by Remus. The wolf having emerged, the amber speckled brown gaze studies him with gentle warmth and understanding...

"Wish what cubling?" The mixed gruff voice of both Moony and Remus spoke. The voice wanting to know, knowing that his cub won't get better until he lets it out. Lets it go and forgets...

After all that is the Way...

Hard pressed to answer, despite his will not to, Harry scowls and then looks away from the kind man, who was one of his father's closest friends before his death. "I wish it didn't still hurt so much." He murmured. It was so soft, that if it wasn't for the presence of Moony at that moment, Remus might never have heard those words.

“Harry, it will hurt, it will hurt for a long time. Do you remember back when I had thought Sirius had betrayed us all?”

“Yes...”

“I felt the same way as you do now, when I found out that wasn’t the case. Even though I knew Sirius was innocent, and had forgiven him for thinking I was the traitor and not Peter. I still felt the pain...all those years. Because even though he never actually fired the spell, it was indirectly Sirius’s fault for what happened...”

“You blamed him?!”

“Yes...for a little while I did.” Remus said softly. “To a degree even to this day I still do, but you know something. That was the past Harry and it is what helped me to realize that I have changed. I was not the same person and neither was he.”

“So what did you do?”

“I introduced myself again.”

Confused, Harry looks at Remus with a puzzled expression. Amusement dancing in the eyes of the older man, the wolf tilts his head to look at Harry with a gentle gaze. “We were two different people Harry; we knew each other, but not the same way we used to. By re-introducing ourselves, we were telling the other that this is a new start.” Remus stated. “And although we only had two years, we became friends once more. Not as close as we once were Harry, but given time.”

“You might have developed it again...”

“Yes...”

Listening to his words Harry was contemplating many things. Mostly the fact that Remus was right...

The older wolf had shared some of those memories with Harry when they were France via the pictures from his Hogwarts days. It was

obvious in those images compared to the memories he has, that Remus as well as Sirius were closer then than what they had been when the latter broke out of Azkaban.

There had been between the two men, and yet they had managed to form a tentative friendship once more in those two years. A friendship that never really had the chance to grow again...

Silent as he looked out the window in thought, he found Gabrielle looking at him. Her blonde hair flying to the side for a moment thanks to the wind, she tilts her head at him in that way that asks...

Are you all right? Do you need me?

No I'm fine...

You sure?

Yes...

Satisfied by his response, although she halfway wanted to come in anyway, the blonde looks at him as blows him a kiss which causes him to smile. It was that smile which made her heart sing with joy. For she knew that her show of affection had brought that light she adored into his eyes. A light that showed he was at peace...

Turning back but not before giving him a seductive look for later, she went back to watching as she turns back to her contest, the blonde as well as the other women let out whoops of delight as another shirt comes off.

Harry just shakes his head and laughs as does Remus.

After all one of the first things that they both had to do, concerning their ability to trust was know when and to whom to give it.

Gabrielle and Tonks had earned theirs and reaching for a letter. It was time for another to maybe start earning his. Sitting at a desk, Harry reaches for some parchment and a quill...

It was time to start writing a letter...

-8-

In the midst of doing his bills, Ron Weasley was startled as a very familiar looking owl flew into his window. One that most definitely belongs to his old friend... Giving a hoot of hello as she had recognized him, the snowy bird had approached and offered him her leg for which a letter was attached.

Frightened of that letter, scared of what it may hold for him. Ron was confused as he opened it and started to read. Within moments, the red head gave a sound of understanding and the first beginnings of a smile appeared on his face.

To Mr. Ronald Weasley,

I do not know if you know me, but I would like to introduce myself and start over in the Wizarding world. You see because of things far beyond my control, I haven't exactly had the best years of my life recently...

Recently I have learned that you and I attended Hogwarts at the same time together. Perhaps you can tell me some stories...

Stories that will make life seem good once more.

Sincerely

Harry Potter.

Having read the familiar writing, as he leans back in his chair, Ron looks up to find Hedwig staring at him with a curious and yet warm gaze.

"Starting over huh?" Ron replied softly. "I can do that..."

Saying nothing, the owl just fluffs and preens her feathers as she awaits response in such a way, which as Ron laughs. "Nice to meet you Hedwig..."

Hooting her response, she gives a sound of delight as Ron puts the letter down long enough to get her some treats and water. As she happily partakes of this delight, the red headed man reaches for his own parchment and quill and starts to pen his answer.

To Mr. Harry Potter,

If we were there at the same time together, did you hear about the incident in second year, the one with the car flying into the Whomping Willow?...

-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-

The ashes that were only smoldering embers of hope had now become a flickering flame...

Chapter 47

Issues

To say that Ginny wanted to return home was true. To do it on the arms of the man she loved would be even better. Hence Draco, one of the few Death Eaters, who maintained a business façade, had left to not only check on them. But he had gone to hopefully contact one Harry James Potter.

That was a three days ago.

Getting lost in memories, he remembers an event that has meant a lot to him. So much to the point that his Patronus is a reminder of that moment everytime he casts it. Much to Ginny's delight, it was a fox...

Once when he had to stop Dean from going to far, he had used an excuse that the red headed woman was with him to help her escape. Sensing that the insane man had been following, the pair had acted like lovers as they returned to her apartment.

In the process of the chatting, the red head had asked him if he would allow her to show him something. Something that was precious and that she wanted kept safe. He found out those secrets that the youngest of the Weaselys held that night. Especially one big one that if Voldemort ever found out.

She would be killed on sight. She was not only for the light as he was, but she had managed to hold on to her reasons for why she had joined the Dark Lord.

Vengeance...

The red head was going to get close to him. Close enough to kill... For Voldemort took away her dreams and being who she was...

Well...it was understandable. For all intents and purposes that last year he was there, it was obvious to many of the growing relationship between the Golden one and the youngest of the Weasely clan.

And although many of Potter's things were destroyed as no one had any use for it. Not all of it was apparently...

It seems Ginny treasures the photo album that was once Potter's with all her heart, and had kept it safe, despite what she had been told to do. Although she in the long run had given in and condemned Harry as the others had done, a part of her could not. Harry was just not to the type to do it. It was why she had even shown it to Draco. The blonde a little surprised that she was trusting him, with the knowledge of what she had, point blank asked her why? Why show it to him?

Her answer is what surprised him.

It's because I trust you Draco.

Trust...it is something that he has not often given or even really been the recipient of. He wants to hold it and never let go. At once you might have thought of his closeness to the red headed woman as love, but it wasn't. They were more like brother and sister now then boyfriend and girlfriend,

So now he was hoping to return that trust she had given him, and find Harry for her. Ginny does not need to be with the Death Eaters at all. She is a good young woman who takes far too many risks to protect those who are targeted by their ever loving master. Twice she has head to transfigure the bodies of the pets or of those already killed to protect children.

These children whom were targeted simply because they were Muggleborn... It was through him, despite his belief that she had managed to get the money to send them and the rest of their family who survived to a safer location. In one case the mother, although she had been raped and beaten, had told Ginny that should she need some place to hide others to come and find her.

Ironically the woman ran an Abuse shelter in the Muggle world and had a network of people muggle and wizard alike to hide the victims from those who would kill them.

Through her, Ginny and Draco had continued to fake the deaths or beatings of some people, to get them to safety through this brave woman.

It has been like that for quite some time.

Now as he wanders through Diagon Alley he hopes to find someone, anyone from that meeting who is close to Harry Potter. Well closer than most of the others...

He knows not to bother with Dumbledore himself, or even Weasley and Granger for they had burned their bridges years ago. But according to the rumors that were spread, he had three he could possibly look for. Remus Lupin, Nymphadora Tonks and Fleur Delacourt...

All three according to the rumors may have an idea on where Harry is. One of which whom he meets regularly to give information to for the Order...

It is also now the main reason why all three are now marked high on the Dark Lord's list of capture on sight. Hence, it is the reason why he was wearing some of the heavier glamours when out among many people whom had the potential to recognize him. Like his father, he was known to be a death eater, but yet he had enough wisdom unlike said parent to stay out of the more obvious traps.

Draco was no fool... Not only was he going to try to contact Harry Potter, he was going to warn his cousin that he has grown fond of, despite not being able to talk to her as he wishes to.

It was the only way to survive...and considering that at the meeting it was Tonks in association with Remus and the elder of the Delacourt sisters talking about him. He knew he could kill two birds with one stone...so to speak.

Therefore at the moment he was sitting outside Fortescues in Diagon Alley. He watched the passers by with a mixture of boredom and curiosity on his features, when truthfully he was waiting. This was

where he was to usually meet with the metamorphagus on the days he was to report to her.

That bar ages ago was in case of an immediate protection for something only the Order could do.

Waiting as he was, he looked up to see a hooded person standing beside him. Laughing at something as he orders ice cream for himself and his companion, Draco pays no notice as the woman with him laughs in amusement and pleasure. Thinking nothing more of them, he can't help but think that voice has arisen in him feelings that he thought were long gone.

Competitive feelings to be precise...

Ones that only had emerged, making him feel alive when Harry was around...it was at that moment, though that the hooded figure had returned and promptly sat across from him. His companion pulled into his lap in playfulness; he notices she is hooded just as much as the male was. Watching in annoyance as she escapes to grab the chair next to Draco, he is about to say it was claimed but instead watches as she pulls it closer to the other person.

"Cut that out..." She giggles. "We have to behave..."

About to make a scathing comment, half ignoring the woman's words, that is when bright green eyes look at him in contemplation.

Silvery blue eyes widening in shock, Draco finds himself staring into the image of his rival.

"Potter...!"

"Malfoy..." The young man spoke quietly. "A friend of ours regrets that she could not come and take your report. So she asked me to come in her place." The former Gryffindor replied.

Just stunned at the fact that Harry has yet to hex him or anything; Draco just sits there in stunned surprise. He had thought it would be a

while before he could talk about possibly meeting with his former nemesis. Only to find that it was him sitting in front of him...

Considering the likelihood that this was a fake as Harry would never willingly sit with him... "Tell me...who and what kind of animal did a certain wizard turn me into in our fourth year."

"It was Mad-eye Moody...or should we say Barty Crouch Jr, who turned you into the bouncing ferret during that year because you attempted to hex me while my back was turned."

"It really is you..." Draco replied in shock before anger hits him. "What the hell are you doing out in the open! You do know Voldemort has a price on your head!"

"I know..." Harry said with a sly smile.

"That's why the pride is here with us..." His companion voiced at that time. Whirling to the bright blue eyes looking at him from underneath the hooded shadows of her cloak, which was the moment the multiple sounds albeit faint of growls hit him. Stilling at the footsteps of not one but five men come forward to grab seats at his table.

Draco finds himself staring into the amber eyes of not one but five werewolves. Their power directed towards him, so that he knows of their presence, it shuts off as others become wary and shiver reflexively in fear.

"As you see Malfoy, I am not without aide...and neither will be the ones that I care for, or who in turn come to me for aide."

Despite him wanting to sneer in response, a hint of a smile crosses Draco's lips. "Same old Harry...still have a hero complex don't you."

Chuckling in amusement, Harry nods his head in amusement as Draco is stunned when his companions speak up. Harry's guards for lack of a better term were agreeing with smiles upon their faces. The amber eyes fading now to show speckled versions of their others half's.

“Does he ever!”

“Quite irritating really.”

“Pain to look after him!”

Comments such as those shooting back and forth, the blonde man watches as Harry's hand is taken by the other's beside him. Laughter that is soft and definitely female filling the air, as barbs are traded back and forth by Harry and the others. Draco is just stunned by all this change in his rival. He is still the same Golden boy that he remembers...

But there is something different now about him...something that is strong while at the same time...a little frightening.

“You've changed, Potter.”

Silent, now the others look to Harry who has gone quiet. “Azkaban can do that to you... But you have changed as well Malfoy. Before you would have not hesitated to try and curse me...”

Somehow the understanding of that statement went clear through to Draco's soul. Reflexively he finds himself looking back at his memories and finding himself nodding his head in agreement. “You're right Potter...we all have changed...” He murmurs, but he is startled a moment later as something starts to glow around Harry's neck. Enough that it gains the attention of the others with a worried look...

“Harry...” Said the voice of the young woman beside him, Draco watches as another hand emerges, from underneath the table. Except upon it is a ring...a kind of ring that a woman hopes to receive only once in her life time. “Harry it's all right...” She murmured over and over, neither her nor Harry noticing the intense stare of Draco's upon the ring finger of her left hand.

“Potter...tell our friend to be careful now as well as the others who were at the meeting with her. Voldemort has them now on his capture on sight list.”

“I will...and Draco...”

Startled by the sound of his own name coming from the lips of his former rival, Draco turns around to find a hand being offered out to him. The symbolism of this offer is not lost to Draco who is stunned by this...

“Potter?”

“A clean start Draco...” The dark haired man replied. “A wise man told me that sometimes the best way to forget one’s beginning...is with a clean start. Are you up to the challenge?”

A familiar scowl crosses the blonde’s features as he takes the offered hand within his own, the dark haired one seems to light up as he shakes it with a smile. “Watch it...Harry. I still don’t like you very much.”

“Feelings mutual...after all this...quidditch match? Never did find out who the better seeker was.” Harry asked. The intent and questioning look in his gaze is nothing but honest and forthright to the young Malfoy Lord. That there was a genuine sneer from way back when crossing his features as he answered.

“Me of course...” The blonde retorted.

“As if!”

Promises of more contests and rivalries to come were in that single handshake that had passed between them. Still as memories of the red head who is more than likely dodging Dean at this very moment, Draco moves to ask something but refrains from doing so. Before he tries to intervene to save her...he must know.

“Harry...who is your lady friend...?” Draco asks. The smallest of the group surrounding him at that moment, moves close to Potter. He almost regrets asking as those emerald eyes stare at him with a quiet and guarded nature.

“To keep her safe, no one you need know at the moment Draco...”
Harry stated in such a way as to not press him further.

“I see...Potter...”

“Back to Potter are we...?” Harry chuckles as Draco shoots him a murderous look.

“There is something you should know...something that you should not tell the Weaselys should you come up against us in battle.”

“What is it?”

“Ginny...Ginny joined the Dark Lord.”

Chapter 48

Ginny

If one was to say that a Weasley would join the Death Eaters. That person would say you were crazy. The family were not only known opponents of the Dark Lord, but were among the greatest of the Light Wizard purebloods, despite their economic status. So when the red headed young woman had first approached Voldemort and his minions to join.

Needless to say the Dark lord was quite pleased.

So he never really truly watched her. Instead he had placed that job sorely on that of Dean Thomas as well as Draco Malfoy. Either having had intimate ties at one time or another with her, they would be his caretakers of those he deemed untrustworthy until he could step in and do what he does best.

Torture them into serving only him.

But at the closeness of both men wanted or not, was truly entertaining. It seems the youngest Weasley was not afraid of his new chief torturer and he was delighted at how often she put him in his place. Still, he must speak with the girl concerning her doing that. Instead of calming the young man down, it seemed to only further his obsession with her.

And he would much rather have him focused on what he is told to do, then on the red headed woman. Sometimes his fixation is proving to be more trouble than what its worth. Leaving that thought alone, he gestures for one to step forward and bring out his arm. It has been almost 2 weeks since he had seen the young Lord Malfoy and he was one whom Voldemort did not trust.

Much like his father before him, Draco did tout the rules that Voldemort has set out. But there was something about the way he did it that bugged the Dark wizard.

Dwelling on this he sent his current group away as he awaited the arrival of his inner circle. Of which Draco has inherited his father's position. Said blonde arriving, Voldemort studied the cool and collected features of the young man, who had proved himself many a time in this light hearted battle he was waging against the light.

"How are your businesses?"

"They are in good standing my Lord. The Muggles do not know that they are being enchanted to behave as they do by my company's products." He replied. "It should not be long now, before your plans to take over will become unhindered."

"Good..." Voldemort smiled ruthlessly. Seconds later, he whips out his wand and despite everything Draco screams in excruciating pain as he is cursed by the Crucio. It was only for a moment, but at the strength and sheer speed of its deliverance. That moment can seem like years.

"My Lord...?" He winces out as he struggles to stand up. The pain in his nerves was so strong that it felt like each of his nerves had been hit with a serrated knife.

"I have missed your screams Draco." Voldemort stated cruelly. "Now go...leave me."

Walking as dignified as he could, Draco left Voldemort's chambers before he could collapse from the agony roaring through his system. His silvery blue eyes clouded over to the point they look almost grey now, he finds his arm being thrown over a slender and most definitely female form.

"He did it to you as well huh?" Ginny whispered quietly as she lent him some support. No potions were on hand to alleviate the pain that her friend was going through. Voldemort having had many issues as of late with trust had forbidden all potions from this part of his base of operations.

To those under him though, that was just his way of saying that essentially. He wanted their 'punishments' to be so ingrained into

their minds. That whatever they did to make him angry. They would never do again...

But that was in the beginning. Now with him winning the battles except for that most recent one, he was doing it for fun. She wonders that with the return of Harry will she and Draco have to go through those crucios that had eventually made the Longbottoms.

She had finally heard what was wrong with Neville's parents. Two people, who had never really gotten to know their son, had been brutally tortured to death, by Dean's so called mentors. No one had needed to be done to that point since Harry's death, except for those who had been deemed 'unworthy' of life. And even then, since she had joined she had either stopped it by rescuing the families she could get to.

Or she had simply managed to get them to tone it down. Draco deliberately did not use what he knew to full power unless Voldemort or some of the more loyal inners were around. Even then he did not keep up the duration that he knew he could.

He simply hoped that those he was forced to do it to would be smart and play comatose.

In the long run though, the fact that he was doing it often and well enough to the point that several victims would pass out and have to be enervated. It was that which had earned him the trust of many of those who were truthfully loyal.

The only ones who still held on to their doubt were of course Bellatrix, who quite frankly did not trust anyone save her husband and her darling Lord. But since she was no longer in the picture the only true threat that they had to worry about was Dean Thomas.

Since he was a classmate of Draco's from Hogwarts, despite his different house, Dean knew of the things that the blonde had foolishly done that had earned his father many an excruciating punishment during his attendance. He often gloated on it that unlike Lucius who refused to scream, much to Voldemort's irritation.

His family did...

Then would come one of the more horrendous times, for that was the moment the old Dean would appear. Back then, Bella would calmly take her protégé and she would go about instructing him in new forms of torture.

By doing it to the young man himself...

It was one of the main reasons why, Dean did not wear lighter clothes such as short sleeved shirts or summer robes. The scars on his body from these sessions are still quite visible to the naked eye, if one really truly wanted to look.

It is what had finally broken him all the way and to the point he had simply become a male version of Bellatrix.

Sometimes you would find the screams from those whom Ginny and Draco had not been able to help, being done by Bellatrix as a way of teaching Dean. Other times it would be Dean showing that vile woman a trick or two that would please her to no end.

Ginny's thoughts on her life continued to darken as she went through the vile thoughts and memories that have become so entrenched in her past. That someday she hopes to get rid of it. Finally reaching a lower floor of the enormous base, she manages to get the blonde to the medical ward, where the only other person whom Draco could trust would be.

Severus Snape.

He was someone else who knew that she was there, but unlike Hermione. He did not know the reasons why. Nor did Dumbledore or her family know where she was. Some of the information he had received had actually come through her meetings and not his own with the Dark Lord.

It had helped further to a degree save many innocent many people who are thought dead, by Voldemort but are not.

And considering he was the only really decent potions maker that Voldemort had. The dark lord had placed him in charge of his one and only medical wing.

Just so that none of his Death Eaters can say that he did not care for their safety...

"Professor Snape..."

"What is it now Weasely."

"Our Lord did it again...this time Draco took the hit."

Turning rapidly around from the potions he was busy working on, Snape pulled out those he had not been weakening on purpose to prolong many a death eater. Considering they were still pretty strong despite the reduction in their strength, the process they took to heal their taker was greatly reduced several times.

The ones he kept on hand though, the ones he with Ginny's aide was currently pouring down his godson's throat.

Those were the strongest he could make. He only used those on himself, Ginny, and Draco. Although Ginny believed that he had not told a living soul about where she was. There was one person he had mentioned it to.

Albus knew.

As much as it pained the older wizard, he knew that Ginny was a Death Eater and the reasons behind it. He had hoped he was wrong though, and to only have it confirmed by his most loyal spy?

Well that could break anyone's heart.

As much as he wanted to bring her back, to help her move on, by the time he had found out. It was too late, for contrary to popular belief. Although he knew a lot of things, Albus Dumbledore was not all knowing.

No one could know everything...

So at the request of Snape, he had not spoken to the Weasleys despite his desire to do just that. They were good people and having lost so much, to find that their youngest was doing things out of vengeance?

Would hurt them to the point of insanity...

"No more..." Draco managed to get out as he gently pushed the potions away. "I'm fine..."

"So what happened this time Draco?"

"Voldemort decided to Crucio me for the fun of it." The blonde whispered in anger. "He told me he missed hearing my screams..."

Shuddering in reflex to those words, the others in the room wisely say nothing. To become a Death Eater, there are certain things one must now do to one's self. Things that would make any one else retch in disgust...

Of the many who would approach Voldemort to join? For every 100 souls only about 40 or so would make it in. The others were too far gone or even quit to save what was left of their sanity. These last seven years for the Dark were almost if not just as bad as it was for the light.

Whereas, the light had taken measures to hide and to protect themselves, there were those with the mark or even traces of it had no such ability. The marks served as summoning devices and if you did not show, there was a spell that the Dark Lord would use to bring you to him.

Once there you never came back the same way again...

Draco had once tried not to come...

Needless to say, there were parts of the young's man body that held scars that would normally never be there.

Ever since then, the three had banded together...

"He's getting more fanatical Severus..." Draco said as he managed to sit back up. "The return of Potter is making him more calm and deliberate in his 'affections'. I'm surprised he hasn't killed that idiot Fudge yet..."

Calm and to point, Ginny looks at the blonde through tired brown eyes. "Draco he did...Fudge is dead. Voldemort in a fit of anger as no one had been able to break Bellatrix out of her comatose state of mind killed him in his rage."

"I see...and let me guess he wants us to bring him a new pet?"

"Yes...or he's going to use us." Ginny whispered. Her own pained body still in agony, she hurts so much, that she gladly takes the painkillers Severus offers her.

Nothing more is said as they realize that they will have to be more inventive in their lies.

If they are to save anyone else...

As they pondered this, Draco couldn't help but look at his friend and wonder something else as well. How was he going to tell her that the man she loved had moved on?

"Draco?"

Hearing her curious voice Draco gestured for more potions as he tries to be delicate about what he is going to say.

"Ginny...I ran into Potter and he knows..."

Paling at this, as she understands what he is referring to. The young woman does something that she has never done in her life. She willingly passes out... But before Severus could reach to revive her, Draco shook his head. "There is something else Severus that I have to tell her... Harry...wasn't alone."

Confused for a moment, Snape's eyes widen in understanding. Despite her being a Weasley he had come to care for this bright young lady, who had been helping him in the hospital wing lately. Many of the new recruits that did not make it came to them.

For the pain medication that they would need for the rest of their life...

"So he moved on?" Snape said quietly.

"From what I gathered yes..." The blonde replied. "I could not see her face, but the way he reacted to her presence. They are together..."

Never knowing as they discuss what Draco had seen, Ginny just laid there listening. Having come around quickly because of the pain in her body, she had heard every word spoken. Each one was breaking her heart and yet at the same time she said nothing.

Harry had moved on...without her with him.

Does he even still remember me?

-8-

Gabrielle once again woke up from her nightmare. They were becoming more and more frequent now, and so she knew that time was getting close.

Still she was happy though...for as she smiled she could not wait to tell her future husband the news. It would be her wedding present to him...

After all they were due to exchange vows in a month and a half...

Chapter 49

Confusion

It has almost been two weeks since he had spoken with Draco and Harry was admittedly worried. Staring into the fireplace of Godric's hollow, that doubled as fire and floo he was in thought.

Although he had not said anything to Ron in the letters that they shared with one another, the news that Ginny was a Death Eater had hit him hard. Something from Draco's stance also told him that it was more than likely his former best friend did not know of his sister's choices.

Old feelings that had not risen for a while, that he thought had gone had surfaced leaving him confused and wondering about what to do.

"Worried?" Gabrielle whispered as she sat next to him.

Hearing the softness of her voice, and the immediate gentleness that it exuded Harry allowed himself to relax and lie down in her presence. His head in her lap, he could already feel her hands gently combing through his hair.

"Confused..."

"Aaah, it is this Ginny is it not?"

Turning up to look at her, despite his position, Harry can't help but see the gentle and loving smile upon her features. "Gabrielle...I..."

"It is all right Harry." The blonde replied gently. "She was your first love...of course you care about her."

"You don't think it's wrong?"

"Harry...the fact that you have chosen to stay here with me, rather than go and find her? That tells me much." Gabrielle whispered with a soft gaze.

“That’s what’s wrong! Despite the past Gabrielle, I owe the Weaselys so much. It would only be right that I did go and search for her.”

“I know Harry...I know. The problem is she is of the enemy now is she not. Sooner or later you won’t have to find her...she will find you.”

Despite the soft quality of her voice, Harry ends up looking at Gabrielle with his Green eyes wide and expressive in disbelief. The young woman looks at him with a sad gaze in her features. “Deep down you know I am right Harry, sooner or later you may have to fight her if only to protect her from herself.”

Remaining silent, he just turns back and looks towards the warm fire that he had been staring into before she came. Savoring the feel of her hand through his hair, out of what became habit for him, his own hand started running up and down her legs. As if to absorb the feel of comfort that only she could give...

-8-

Sirius was looking at the gaze of his godson and future bride with a smile that loved and also worried.

The way Nimue had taken off after whatever she had seen was nerve wracking to say the least. And it also made him wonder...

You see something else was starting to happen. Whatever this place was, it was starting to shimmer. Starting to look once more like the Department of Mysteries, but every time he would approach that spot, that place where he could reach?

It disappeared...

And he was pulled back to where he currently is now.

The only real entertainment or even company that he has is Nimue and the scrying pool that helped him watch the events going on without him. Already he knew what Gabrielle was hiding and knew that Harry would be not only worried as it would make her a bigger target.

But he would still be pleased as punch, for if there was ever someone ready to be a father...

It was Harry...

Gabrielle was two weeks pregnant.

The flames of Hope began to grow even brighter

But at the same time darkness was beginning to fall

Two prophecies

One man, One woman

And a horrible choice...

Chapter 50

Return of the Grim 1

It is now two days before they were to be fully married, and Gabrielle was smiling warmly as she touched her belly. She has not as of yet, had told Harry of her gift to him. Fleur as a veela already detected it just the other day as her body was changing as had Remus and Tonks.

And of course both Tonks and Fleur had immediately pounced on her in delight.

“My baby sister is to be a mother!”

“Fleur! Let her breathe!”

Babbling herself now in French as she pesters her with questions, Gabrielle giggles. When she finally calms down, the small group of men and women look at the blonde in delight.

“Well do you know if it is a boy or a girl?”

“A boy...” Gabrielle said with a soft smile as she looked at her sister. The implications of this hitting the older Veela faster then you can think, the blonde bends down to touch her belly with a kind of wonder.

“Are you sure?”

Nodding her head, Gabrielle touched her sister’s forehead to share the magic she has felt since his conception. It does not have the usual delicate flare of a Veela woman, but the strength of a male.

“I want to name him after his father and godfather who have gone Remus. What are their names?” Gabrielle asked the werewolf, who almost sobbed as the honest expression on the young woman’s features. “I think once I tell him, it will be nice to have a name to go with the announcement...”

“James and Sirius were their names...” The wolf managed to choke out as he reached and hugged the blonde for all that he could. The young woman smiled as she accepted the embrace. Much like her Harry, this man had been through a lot and only those who have endured similar hardships at one time or another could really understand.

“Then please help me with the announcement for Harry? Do you think he would like the name James Sirius Potter?”

Nodding his head, the old wolf holds the young woman close to his heart. His hug was fatherly as well as filled with an eternity of gratefulness. He looks at Gabrielle who studies him with a confused look as he speaks.

“Thank you...”

“For what Remus?” The younger of the two Veelas ask with a curious gaze.

“For being who you are. For helping Harry to heal and to think...”

Smiling as if in understanding the young woman just gazes at him in such a way that Remus knows she is stating that he was welcome. At that moment, before anything else is said, the person that they all mutually loved came walking through. Although the atmosphere of the room felt happy, he was admittedly puzzled by the silence.

“Did I miss something?” Harry asked in confusion. He and half a dozen of the wolves had left go stop an attack earlier that day upon a muggle household. Through their contact with Draco, his small group was getting some of the reports and things that the Order could not get to right away.

One of the problems that they had noticed lately was that Voldemort had been planning multiple stages of battles since that day in Diagon Alley, almost three months ago. So many were now occurring at once, that despite the wins, and the light side turning the battle around.

The Order and Ministry were being spread to far out to be doing much good.

Harry and the shifters from La Royaute, helped stopped more than a couple these last few days and they were taking its toll. Immediately as he walked in Harry found himself being fussed over by not only his fiancée, but by the rest of his newly mixed family.

Fleur had taken on the role of medic/potions maker. She was by no means as perfect as Snape, but with aide from Gabrielle who worked beside her. The sisters had enhanced their potions with Veela Magic, enough that 90 percent of the time, they worked almost as good.

What is strange is that although their magic was an illusion when used mostly, it was as Fleur stated many times recently.

When it comes to healing, it is as much mind as it is magic. By giving the taker the illusion of it being the best there is, the body accepted it as such and so even the weaker potions could be as effective as the strong.

The theory behind this kind of magic was indeed intriguing to Remus as well as Tonks. The two quizzing both blondes over it, the two sisters were delighted to explain about their magic in even further detail.

It had left both with various ideas for the future...

No one noticed that something quite unwelcome was lurking in the shadows save one...

And that one realized the real truth behind Voldemort's plans of attack.

-8-

Sirius paled as he recognized the silver pawed rat skulking about the house. Screaming at Harry or anyone else to listen it was at that time that Nimue had stepped forward.

Knowing what Remus would have thought as he witnessed the house being rebuilt, The former convict of Azkaban was pleased and proud of what his best friend the Wolf had done for his godson.

But now, despite everything, he grew fearful for not only Harry but for everyone else...

"Damnit Remus! Smell...get Moony to smell the air!" The dark haired man ranted aloud. Hell get anyone to sniff it!"

"You can't sniff what smells, tastes, and acts, like another animal..." Nimue said sadly as she approached. The knowledge in her mind is breaking her so much, that as it begins to happen she must be close to calm down this man who will surely be screaming and upset. "You can't detect when something else overwhelms..."

"You know what will happen though!"

Sadly nodding her head, the fae witch looks at Sirius with a look of sadness and pain. "I do...freedom and death..."

"Can't you do something?"

"No..." Nimue cried out softly. "It is why I am here, there are some things that as much as I try to change it, even Fate will pull me here to keep from doing so."

"No...No...NO!" Sirius screamed out in rage. "Don't do it! Don't let it happen!" The man yelled to the gray mists surrounding the only color in this place. "Don't destroy his life again!"

Screaming and yelling himself hoarse, Nimue herself cried in despair, the words of the second prophecy coming to mind, she whispers them softly to herself as she stares at the events about to unfold...

Like one trapped before

The Grim resides

Growth is the key to freedom from mine

Realization that all is not the same is the test all must pass

Freedom then for the Grim will come

But the price will be high

Death is the key

To survive for love to the blessed one

Must be given in exchange

To free he who is wanted by the Phoenix that isn't but is

A willing sacrifice must be made

Silent and sad as she watches as Sirius now tries to force his way out through the misty images that appear around him now even more the before. Already tendrils of magic that is rightfully his reaches out from that plane of life to reconnect with its master.

"I hope you manage to get out soon Sirius Black...I hope so..."

-8-

Is currently bawling her brains but posts this anyway

Chapter 51

The Return of the Grim 2

One believes timing is always the key to winning. Timing is what makes us strong. Timing is also what can destroy us. If anyone knows that better than anyone else? It is Voldemort. Peter as soon as he was able to had scurried back to his Lord and Master. Although he does owe Potter a life debt, he hopes somehow that he will be assigned to the mission, so that he may do what he can.

Many of the things he had done as well as have done recently, was enough to know that even in death it will not be enough to save him from the hell he has made his world. His home...

Amongst the inners he knows there are spies. There are those who can deliver the message needed that he hopes gets to Harry on time. He may be a coward, but he was not a fool. He had seen Voldemort destroy too many families, dark and light alike to want to see another destroyed.

Especially Harry...

Although personality wise he is more like his mother, from what he has seen. His stance, carriage, everything else spoke of his once former best friend. James...

To this day he screams in silent regret at what he had done. At the chain reaction he had started that left these last 23-24 years in a state of pain and anguish that he thought he would escape from.

But it did not matter...

The pain never left the pain of being on the outside despite being in the group. The longing he felt to be accepted as he was...

He had gave in to what he thought would be a change. But nothing did...

Now standing as he was he listened as plans were being made to crash Godric's Hollow once more.

It is certain that because of Wormtail's entrance into it, that although the former home of the Potters was rebuilt. No one had really thought of changing the wards or the fact that another secret keeper might be needed...

History does indeed have way of repeating itself...ironic isn't it? that Harry's life will once again be ruined at the home of his childhood.

-8-

Two days later...

Harry was blissfully happy.

On second thought, not only was he in bliss, he was for the first time in a long while truly enjoying his life. He was married now...

He...Harry James Potter was married. He was married to a loving, understanding, vexing, irritating and extremely gorgeous wife, by the name of Gabrielle Delacourt, now Gabrielle Potter as of today. Watching as she stands up, Gabrielle giggles softly as he is handed a box by an exuberant Fleur who is flanked by Remus and Tonks as well as Ron and Bill Weasley.

Harry himself had chosen a first step to reuniting with the family of red heads, and had invited Ron as his friend and Bill for Fleur. With Remus's help they had been escorted somewhat to his childhood home, without ever truly realizing that they were there. It was not only for their safety, but Harry's as well.

So although neither talked much during the wedding inside Godric's Hollow, both were grateful for the chance to not only be a part of it. But in Bill's case to get to know Fleur once more, for despite the years apart, the couple was still very much in love with one another. But as the wolves would put it...

The trick was getting them to admit it...

Still they all watched with a mixture of curiosity and knowing smiles on their faces.

“Gabrielle?”

“Open it Harry...it is a present for you.”

But before he could do anything, the wolves including Remus sniffed the air. Fleur and Gabrielle both paling themselves, the small party wonders what is going on, as the shifters including Remus race out to battle.

“Harry, we must get our wands!”

“Gabrielle?”

“Listen to my sister Harry, I sense magic...and it feels wrong...”

Nodding his head he gestures at Ron and Bill, the latter wondering what was going on, Ron immediately had told him and only seconds later the famed curse-breaker of Gringotts had his wand out and at the ready.

A smile briefly passed Harry’s lips and for once he is glad that Remus had talked him into giving his friends another chance. It was through both him and Ron now, which had encouraged him to start talking to Hermione as well as the others. Although they had not been invited, many presents had been flown or floored in the previous two days via Ron’s old and not so hyper any more owl Pig and a new one named Cannon.

“Ron...you remember what to do right?”

Looking a trifle insulted, Harry gives a soft hint of laughter before turning to his new wife who was terrified and yet ready to fight at the same time.

“Gabrielle, stay here with Fleur and Tonks please?”

“Harry...I...”

“PLEASE!”

Reluctantly nodding her head, the three remaining women watch as the men race out to join the wolves in what was happening outside. Tonks wanting to go herself knew that somehow she should remain here, but yet...

“Tonks go...”

Confused at Fleur’s quiet voice, it is repeated once more by Gabrielle. “Please Tonks...go and help my husband and Remus?”

Nodding her head, the woman races off to join the battle, as an auror she had already begun uttering the chant to bring even more reinforcements to the battle. Flying through the doors of the home, not realizing that as much as she slams them shut, the force can leave them wide open...

Tonks immediately races to join Bill Weasley who was dodging curses left and right from three death eaters that he was battling.

Remus and the wolves had already shifted and were taking out as many as they could faster than most can blink. Despite all appearances, it seems that as of yet, Greyback who had arrived and was leading the battle had yet to join. And that is what had set the wolves off.

They had sense another encroaching upon their perceived territory and were itching to take him out. Remus who knew what he must do was already working his way through alongside the others of the minor death eaters that had been placed in his path.

What was painful was the fact that the stronger ones were coming...

In the meantime, as the battle continues no one notices the cloaked figure in the shadows of the woods beyond the house. A malicious smile crossing his features in wanton vengeance for the now

mindless coma creature that was once his beloved mentor, Dean Thomas released a familiar and very deadly snake.

All though the wards were still holding somewhat as Harry's presence had strengthened the Wards of the Potter home with his being there. They were severely weakened by the fact that hints of the old Fidelius charm were still in effect.

Harry's presence was the only reason that the full force of the Death Eaters had not crashed his home. Not considering the fact they had no intention of doing so anyway.

There was no ward that detected the scent of a killer that was not human...

Nagini began to slither her way into the home...

-8-

Sirius began to bang his way further through the misty areas that showed the department of mysteries. Having spared a moment to watch what was happening, hoping beyond hope that help was coming...

No one came and it only incensed him further. He continued to bang the barriers with all his strength separating him from this world and his home...and the godson whose life is about to be destroyed once again.

-8-

Ginny worded her attacks and soundlessly voiced the counters to it as she was told explicitly by Greyback to start her own movements. She had not wanted to come today, but she had been forced to go by Draco and by Snape both.

It seems that Dean had finally caused enough doubt upon her loyalty and this was to be her test. That and it was the only way to keep their combined secrets safe.

So she was sent as well as Greyback and Dean as her supervisors or should one say caretakers...to attack her former childhood sweet heart...

She doesn't even know if she could or would even survive fighting Harry. At the moment, though she was desperately trying to hold off a wolf that was startled at her appearance in this battle.

Both recognizing one another, Ginny finds herself staring into a shifting form of one Remus Lupin...

Chapter 52

The Return of the Grim 3

Remus found himself staring into the eyes of a death eater, which seemed all too familiar. The scent alone of this said cloaked figure told him who it was. And he just couldn't believe it!

"Ginny? Cubling?" The older wizard whispered out in shock. For like Harry and a majority of his friends, Moony considered them his pride family. Hence to find one fighting him and yet still smell the same sweet scent of pride coming from her... well the old wolf was now confused.

As the cloaked figure stiffened in surprise, Remus before anything else happens is pushed to the side mentally as he shifts once more. Moony taking over, an almost paternal event happens as the large wolf leaps and gently but firmly takes the young woman down with him. Making sure not to bite down as this seems more like an errant cub to the Wolf than an actual enemy, he is rewarded as he lightly squeezes on her throat between his jaws, causing her to pass out in pain.

Growls communicate to the others in his pride fighting that this particular one is not to be killed. Answering sounds respond in kind, a lesser Alpha by the name of Peter moves and takes the unconscious figure to a place deep within the wards that are fluctuating as they struggle to hold.

The mere fact that she passes through alerts the others attacking that maybe they can as well. Forces them to think twice, as all of a sudden they are held in place by the magic of the wards before forcibly thrown out...

For now a fresh and new one was added. Because other than being a curse breaker, Bill Weasley was extremely proficient in wards, which were used frequently to keep muggles and wizards from running afoul of things that can hurt rather than heal.

So as Tonks worked on the Death Eaters, her speed rivaling that of Harry's and or Remus's the older of the Weaselys present, set about casting the wards he needed with Harry's permission.

Now they all had a fighting chance.

Over the howls, and battles going on, it takes only a moment for them to notice the screams of Fleur Delacourt coming from inside the house.

-8-

There is a secret among the Veela.

It is this; at certain times of their life they are capable of immense feats of real true magic. Magic that would and could rival that of Merlin in fact. Among those times is when they try to protect their family...

Earlier...

The minute Tonks had left, both women rushed to gather as much of the medical supplies as they could for the men and women fighting. Gabrielle and Fleur both whipping off the outer delicate robes of their wedding regalia get started working on what was needed. Each woman picking up a potion you could feel the magic flowing from them.

Enhancing the healing of the mind as it heals the body within each with their illusions that it can do just that.

Rapidly both sisters work side by side to do as many as they can. Bandages that were clean were sterilized with quick spell work. The women rushed to get ready what they could. But as Gabrielle whirled around to reach for more potions, the young woman froze in fear.

"Fleur...don't move." The young woman had finally seen the enormous reptile poised to strike behind her sister.

“Gabrielle?” The older blonde started to speak as she was turning around, her puzzling look on her features evident she was about ask why... But by then it was too late, for out of love for her sister. The younger of the two blondes reached out and yanked her away only to be struck herself...

It was that moment as it hit home that all her magic went to protecting the life inside her. Keeping the poison that is now beginning to infect her body. As Gabrielle collapsed to the ground, Fleur began screaming as she shot spells off at the reptile that was now poised to hit her.

-8-

One of those times is when they are dying...

When the Veela is dying unusual and surprising things have been known to happen.

Sirius Black fell through the misty veil and back into where he had originally fell. His magic eagerly soaking into his body, the escaped convict feels himself screaming out in pain from its rejoining of his body. Rendering him weak and barely able to stand as it has been years since he has been able to use it...

As this is happening Nimue steps out as well. For it is only with her magic now will he be allowed to rejoin those who need him. But she must wait till he has fully claimed it all...

“Now you understand, much like you gave your life to protect your godson, a sacrifice of sorts as you say. She is giving her life for her sister...and for her baby.”

“No...don’t take her from him...” Sirius whispered out as he struggled to gain control of his body.

“I have no choice.” Nimue cries. “All ready her connection to this realm is breaking apart. Unlike yours that was merely stretched. Hers is disintegrating. She is desperate to protect her child...to the point she will die to give him a chance to live.”

“Do something!”

“It is too late...Fate’s decision has already begun. That is why he has allowed you to return Sirius Black. What is about to happen, only you can comfort...”

-8-

The screams were enough. Smiles passed among the Death Eaters that were still alive and free to take off. They were to now keep them busy until the snake has come out of the small home...

In the meantime none of them noticed that as they continued fighting, the mask falling off one of their own, as Ginny Weasley starts to come to. The wolves busy for a moment they do not know, what is happening behind them. They just know something is wrong and before they can investigate they must keep those in front from going behind.

In a semi-conscious daze, the young red headed woman felt as if she was being called for something. Something important...

Something that only she can do...

Stumbling around as if in a daze, she entered the home and the call had grown stronger. Finally it ceased as she found Nagini threatening a woman who was standing tall over a pale figure on the ground. Without a second thought, the red head lifted her hand and said the incantation that forced the snake not only out of the house, but into death as it landed in the middle of a crossfire between many a death eater and wolf.

Ripped to shreds and then burned with an incendio, this is one those still fighting Harry and the others choose to vanish for this is also when a bright light of pure white energy erupts from within Godric’s Hollow.

The light of love and warmth spreading...Harry pauses as his eyes widen in fear and loss.

Memories of the past...

There were sweet images of just togetherness by the fire and her playful laughter ringing through his ears as he tickles her.

Her quiet presence soothing the rocking turmoil of his soul...

Her wisdom calming his thoughts...

At that moment it is as if time seems to stop and he sees her standing before him. Pale and ethereal in a warm golden light, he starts to approach her and yet can not. Only the barest touch of light to his skin, warming his soul tells him that this is somehow really happening.

I love you...Harry. Live for him...live for our son.

Don't go...don't! He finds himself struggling to yell. But yet his voice remains silent, he and his magic held in place. Confusion evident on his features she smiles sadly as she disappears...

Live...live for our son Harry! Live...

-8-

Only moments earlier...

Moments earlier as the snake had disappeared; Fleur looked at the woman in the cloak who was helping her. About to fire a stupefy spell, it is at that point that Gabrielle speaks...

"Sister...help me. Help me up please..." The younger woman cried out softly and in pain. "I must...it's her...the one from my dreams."

Confused for a moment, the older of the two blondes whirl around in a state of denial... "NO! I refuse Gabrielle! I refuse to let you go! You can live! You know you can!"

Smiling softly despite her tears, the younger of the two women weakly shakes her head. Pleas traveling back and forth in French, the

older of the two women cries as she bends down to help her sister. "Gabrielle I beg of you...don't do this."

"Sister...my nightmares...I knew this was coming...if Harry lost both of us...all is lost. With her here, he will not. Please...please help me. Please help me give him a reason to live?"

That said, the younger blonde holds her hand out weakly to the red head. Somehow and despite what she knows, Ginny Weasley takes it and seconds later passes out as the Veela magic merges with her own. Creating a burst of pure white energy between the two women...

Carrying something with it, that now seeks the warmth of her own body to be nurtured. Waiting as if to be accepted by the magic that already begins to merge with her...

Deep within her own conscience, Ginny is confused as the image of the young woman appears in her mind. Smiling sadly and yet with a gentle smile...

Please...take care of our baby? She whispered. He needs you now...Please? Please take care of him?

Without even understanding why, it is the sense of responsibility to something within her that has her nod in acceptance.

Thank you... I chose a name for our son...it is James Sirius...please make sure Harry understands? I did not want to go. But it was the only way... The blonde ethereal woman whispers with heartfelt love and thanks as she cries. And thank you so much...because of you...there is yet hope...

The magic flares once more, and a link now is forged. A link between the life of a young child and his new mother whose magic intertwines with the old slowly so that it may feed off of both for its own magic core that was developing within.

Before she could check or do anything, Fleur just rocked the dead figure of her sister in her arms. The red headed woman looking much

like her Bill was out like a light clutching the hand of her sibling within her own. The pulsing white energy glowing between them...

That's as the others came in seconds later. The battle dissipating rapidly with the death of the snake, Fleur is forced to stop Harry as he tries to break the two women's hands apart so that he can get to Gabrielle.

"Don't Harry...don't. You will kill him." Fleur sobs out.

"Kill who! Please...I want Gabrielle...back!"

"She's gone...she's gone! Don't destroy what she has started to save yours and her son!"

"What..." Harry whispered as he began to collapse to the ground. "My son?"

Fleur accios the box, which they were to open before the battle. Gesturing for him to open it through her tears... Scared and frightened to do so, Harry opens the lid to find a knitted baby jumper as well as several other items of baby clothing and furniture that had been shrunk to fit inside this box.

"Harry it was to be a present for you...Gabrielle was pregnant..." Fleur choked out.

"No...no..." Harry screamed. "NO DAMNIT NO!"

It was at that moment as the wolves struggle to suppress the rising emotional aura of Harry and his magic. The Veela crystal that he had worn around his neck shattered at the sheer amount of power released.

And despite the release of their own full aura, the wolves found it hard to keep it from exploding around them destroying them all.

But as a man comes stumbling in, Remus as well as Tonks and the two Weasley men look on in shock.

“Let it out Prongslet...cry...scream...But let it out vocally. Don’t turn into me.” Sirius Black whispered weakly. His strength still not fully back with him, he somehow avoids the flying swirls of destruction, to hit his godson into submission. His words repeating over and over, despite what should be a happy and joyous occasion...

“Let it out... grieve...” Sirius murmured. Tears in his own eyes mirroring the pain in Harry’s heart... That said the magic begins to die down as the words reach the dark haired youth. Arms wrapping around the former convict, Harry sobs...

For the first time since his betrayal...

Harry well and truly grieves...

As this happens, the two Weasley men approach and although in shock and sadness at what has happened to Harry, tears running down their own cheeks. The death of Harry’s wife, as well as the discovery of their sister as the enemy was traumatizing to both now. But it is Bill, who because of his fight with Fleur years before had looked up something of the Veela nature long ago in an effort to understand...

“Ginny...she...she’s pregnant with Gabrielle and Harry’s baby now isn’t she?”

“Yes...” Fleur replied quietly as she sobs. “That is why we must wait to separate her and Gabrielle until the magic to transfer his link from my sister to her. To do so now will kill him and Ginny...”

A very little and unknown fact about the Veela...

When a pregnant one is on the verge of Death, they are given one shot. And one shot alone to save their unborn child. It is why there are so many cross breeds and yet so few pure blood Veelas at the same time.

Only one who’s magic is compatible with that particular Veela and is willing to take the child within, can successfully carry the child within her own womb...

-8

Is currently crying her eyes out now even more

goes off to go binge on chocolate

Chapter 53

Ashes of Grief

Sirius sighed as he stepped out of the bedroom that had belonged to Harry and Gabrielle. Having placed an unconscious godson there, the old ex-convict was feeling tired and very much the pain of what had happened.

Walking down the hall of Godric's Hollow, the wolves and everyone who had been at the wedding were in quiet and mournful silence.

"How is he?" Ron asked sadly. It has been several hours since the battle, and Fleur with Bill's aide, once Ginny and Gabrielle had released their connection had removed her sister's body to get it preserved and prepared for a funeral not only here in the Potter family plot, but also so that Alexandre and Isabelle would be able to come and bring the rest of the Delacourts.

As this was happening though, Remus and Tonks were not only watching over Ginny, who was still sleeping. But both were working on the wards to not only strengthen them. But to keep the red headed woman from attempting to flee back to her Master.

Nobody was really sure to be honest of what was going on at the moment...

"He's sleeping now..." The Animagus replied. His own dark eyes rimmed red with grief, even if he did not know Gabrielle, from where he had been he had known the young woman was good for Harry. "Ginny...and the baby?"

"Ginny's asleep Padfoot..." Remus responded as he pulled his friend into a tight hug. "As to their son, Tonks is going to stay and watch over him and the apparent new mother to be until I go and get Madame Pomphrey."

"Let me come with you..." Sirius stated.

But before Remus could say anything, Ron placed a hand on the older man's shoulder and shook his head. "As much as I am glad to see you Padfoot, Harry needs you here more, then at Hogwarts."

"But...?"

"No buts...Padfoot." The old wolf said gently. "Ron's right. Although I can grieve and sympathize with Harry, right now more than anyone you are the only one at the moment who can understand what he is going through. He needs you...stay...stay until the rest of Harry and Fleur's family come..."

Somehow those few words mean a lot to the other man and he nods his head. With Remus heading off alongside Ron, the house would still be secure. For as they were regrouping after the battle, and as Sirius was comforting Harry, Fleur as the next one now related to the Potters had given permission for a new Fidelius charm to be cast.

Bill doing so, it was agreed that Remus would be the secret keeper. Because of his status as a shifter, despite the allies he may have and the orders he had given. Voldemort or any of his cronies was less likely to take him on to return to this home without amassing a large force to subdue him.

Watching as both men left and departed, Sirius turned to find the pride of shifters staring at him with a mixture of sadness, curiosity, and pain. All of them felt guilty for not protecting their wolfling's mate from the death she had suffered. Waiting for a punishment, that was sure to come once Alexandre and Isabelle arrived, with the Delacourt family. They simply gave little mournful stares towards the rooms where Harry and Ginny slept as well as where Fleur was casting the necessary spells on her sister's body.

It was only an hour or so later as he sat between two shifted wolves who instinctively let the wizard scratch them as a human would a bet between the ears, that the fireplace flared to life and an older woman with silvery hair tumbled out of the fire place.

Closely followed by a dark haired man, who reminds Sirius much of himself when he was younger in his stance and carriage.

The tearful blonde and gray haired man that followed and were helped by the other man to their feet could be none other than the parents of Harry's wife and sister-in-law. It was at that moment the silvery haired woman asked a question that needed to be answered. "Where is my wolfling?"

"Asleep..." Sirius responded sadly as he stood up, not even really thinking that others may still believe him guilty of what he may have supposedly done years ago. "Names...Black...Sirius Black... Harry is my godson."

As Alexandre and Isabelle, both nod their heads in acceptance sensing nothing is wrong, for his scent may be similar to that of a canine primarily. But the fact that he smells so strongly also of Harry and family, that as the two others begin to say something against him. Alexandre silences them with a single stare as Isabelle approaches the escapee...

"Harry has told me about you." The woman smiled gently. "Especially considering he thought you to be dead... How is it you are alive?"

Looking up into the woman's eyes, Sirius finds an open curiosity and grief in them over the recent events. But he also finds something that he had seen in one other person...

A mother's unquestioning love...

"Lily would have adored you, you realize." He said softly as he stood up. "As to where I was I guess one could believe I was dead...it's hard to explain."

Accepting his answer for now, Isabelle takes his arm and to pull him away from all this pain. "Come with me and do not worry about Harry... Alexandre will be there should he wake. He also knows the loss of loved one..."

Guarded somewhat despite everything Sirius, nods his head in acceptance. The older woman smiled gently, her warmth so much like that of the way a mother should be...how Lily's was before her

death. He can see now why Harry had been taken with her kindness and her love.

“You know who we are don’t you?” The older woman stated with a kind acceptance. Guiding the escapee outside to where they could sit and talk in peace.

“Yes...where I was I could watch...”

“Just not interfere?”

“How?”

Isabelle patted his arm gently as she looked at him. “It’s in your eyes, young one...” She implied as she places same hand to his cheek in a reassuring way. “Eyes full of so much pain and self doubt. You feel like you seem to keep failing them and everyone around you don’t you? You think you are a failure.”

Despite her words no matter how kind, they were, Sirius broke down. No one, not even Remus, once they had resumed their friendship had understood the guilt that Sirius felt at the loss of James and Lily. At not being able to keep his promise to raise Harry, or even now that he felt he failed his godson in not escaping in time to save Gabrielle from her death.

Collapsing to his knees in front of the kindly woman, Sirius allowed himself to cry. Being the Black that he was, never had he really been allowed to release his emotions save for anger, vengeance, and fear. It was part of his upbringing after all...

As this was going on, Alexandre watched alongside the Delacourts. Both parents still sad and upset had listened to what Isabelle was speaking of with the escapee from Azkaban and realized one thing.

No man who felt so much pain could be guilty of harming another soul to the point of death willingly...

It was at that moment that Remus and Ron returned with Madame Pomphrey. The school nurse and Order member was puzzled to all

the secrecy that these two had asked of her. But when she had given the oath, the two told her of what had happened, and she nearly cried in sadness and pain for Harry who was now a widower.

Hearing though of what Gabrielle had done in her final stages of life, she understood immediately and had gathered her medical supplies that she knew would be needed. So upon her arrival the first thing she asked was where was her patient?

With Ron guiding her to where his sister was being looked over by Tonks, Remus found himself greeting Alexandre. The two men talking in sadness and regret over the loss of one of their own, the two alphas discussed the emergence of a missing pride member of sorts. Well missing member to Remus...

Gathering them all around, the old wolf told of the events that had transpired that fateful night years ago. As the wolves and the Delacourts listened to the actual events of that night as seen from the views of not only Harry's fractured memories.

But also from the memories of the man being comforted by Isabelle outside...

When the old wolf had finally finished speaking of the past, the ones who were listening had a new respect for Sirius that would surprise even him. The wolves were chatting amongst themselves, that he would make an excellent member of their pride and were pestering Alexandre about it.

And the Delacourts?

The veela woman who was Fleur and Gabrielle's mother clutched onto her husband's hand with understanding as he did hers. Despite their doubt in what had just been told to them, they understood what they were told combined with the heartbreaking image of him with Isabelle.

Sirius Black was indeed an innocent man.

And all though he was merely an ambassador, when the funeral was done, Mr. Delacourt was going to see about using his connections. And using them to get the truth about what happened that Halloween out and into the open...

No man deserved to be on the run for something he did not do...

All in all, as the Delacourts were escorted to their daughter to not only grieve, but to help prepare the body. The small group of people worked to clean and to change the Hollow once more.

As per a wolf's life, they will mourn and they will remember. But they also will move on...

Harry will need every single one of them, in order to so.

-8-

Darkness of death shadows the hope...

The flames flickering growth becomes uncertain...

Will it rise again and grow strong?

Chapter 54

Life?

Three days later

The funeral was done. As most who mourned her death went back to the main house and away from the family plot, Harry remained and silently, he just stared at her tombstone.

Gabrielle Alexandra Delacourt-Potter

Beloved Daughter

Loving wife

Giver of Hope

"I insisted on the last line wolfling." Isabelle said softly as Sirius crouched down beside his godson. Her hands on his shoulders as she stood behind him, Harry wanted to sob even more again, but fought it back.

"Thank you..."

Alexandre knowing that as much as he wants to help the young wizard, this was something that only his mother and the other could do, as he watched from inside the home from a distance. The Delacourts at the moment were doing all they can to meet the rest of Harry's surrogate family. After all in a way, they were now in-laws.

At this time it consisted mostly at the moment of Alexandre, Tonks, Remus, and the Wolves all of which were sad as they watched what was happening outside.

The wolves were never really punished by Alexandre, but nor were they truly forgiven either.

While Harry had rested, he had not only dragged Remus out along with the others, but between the both of them as this would be a part

of Remus learning to be an alpha the way he should have always been. They set about putting the wolves through a training session they would never forget.

It is said that shifters have amazing healing abilities and they do...

But after both alpha wolves were done...

Let's just say that bruises were still marked on the bodies the following day...

A lesson forgotten is a lesson that sometimes needs to be re-enforced. Even if it is done painfully...

"Why her? Why Gabrielle?" Harry whispered. "She had so much more to give than me! Why did it have to be her?"

Saying nothing the two just hold him tightly as he starts to sob once more. No one really noticed how much of an impact Gabrielle had made on Harry's life when she entered it again. No one save Sirius really, who had suffered a similar childhood to his godson.

His family known for being dark, hadn't gone to the level of the Dursleys. But they might as well have with the treatment of him as a young boy and then the teenager. Maybe that was the foresight James and Lily had when they made him Harry's godfather? He had initially balked at it, saying that despite the laws Remus would have been better.

But James had smiled and shaken his head and said... Padfoot buddy, something tells me that Harry will need you more than anyone I know. Lily had just smiled and nodded her head as she handed a baby Harry to him to hold. And looking into those bright green eyes in the little boy's features... and then the cherubic little smile...

Despite his wondering, how could he refuse?

Confused then, it almost makes sense to him now. James and Lily both had come into his life when he needed them at Hogwarts. Despite the tiff they had been having as they to have just met. They

had made him really truly smile for the first time in a long while. Giving him hope...

Like Gabrielle had done for Harry...

He had told Isabelle that and the older woman had understood with a smile that beamed joy. It was a saying that as she relayed what Sirius had told her about James and Lily, and how much Gabrielle was like them for Harry as they were for the Black.

They were pleased to add that last line instead of her birth and her death...for that sounded very much like their youngest child.

"It was her time Prongslet..." Sirius murmured softly. "But remember though... Remember her last words?"

Live...live for our son...

"She told me to live...to live for our son..." The young man whispered. "But...but I don't have one..."

Isabelle looked down and smiled softly at him. "Yes you do..."

"How can I? Gabrielle's dead!"

"But...Ginny isn't Harry." Sirius replied.

"What? Ginny? How?"

Seeing the confusion, Sirius now realizes that Harry must not know about the presence and return of the youngest Weasley child. The young woman whom according to Fleur and now even Mrs. Delacourt, whose magic was compatible with Gabrielle's and the baby enough to magically transfer the child to Ginny's womb.

Where the magic would surround and protect the little one, while merging steadily with Ginny's own.

For all intents and purposes, Harry's son...would have 2 mothers and not 1.

Telling the young man to the best of his ability with aide from Isabelle who had listened and was holding onto Harry tightly. Or should we say he was holding on to her...

Already a couple of times when he had asked a question, Harry had slipped and called the shifter woman Mum and neither Sirius nor herself had said anything against it, for he needed her presence. He needed Isabelle's unwavering understanding and care.

And Sirius knew that Lily would have approved...

"So Ginny...is a death eater?" Harry worded carefully. "And carrying my son now?"

Nodding his head, Sirius barely had enough time to catch him, before Harry went ballistic in a mixture of rage and anger. Vengeance in the young man's eyes, the older man had trouble restraining him, to the point that Isabelle had gone to fetch Alexandre to aide Sirius in getting Harry to calm down and to relax. While Remus ran to ward Ginny's room as strong as he could with Bill's aide.

Because unfortunately, much like his godfather, despite knowing that she never actually was the one who set the snake upon Gabrielle. She was the enemy...and Harry was in a rage.

"LET ME GO!"

For only the second time in her life, a small shifter woman pulled back an arm and swung, Only having had to do this once before, when her son had reacted the same way when his mate had passed on thanks to Greyback, she knew that again it had to be done.

As her fist connected with Harry's cheek, everyone was in shock including Harry, who had never been hit before like that save from his Uncle. And even then once he had started his magic, he had never really been hit as he was.

"Are you there Wolfing?" Isabelle said sadly as the other men let Harry go. The young man was too surprised and his power had shut

down immediately out of instinct to not harm one's parent. "You can't..." She cried softly.

"But she..."

"No Harry...she may be, but she is also the only one who's magic at that time was compatible with Gabrielle's. Within her body, is your son...yours and your wife's...would you take away the life growing inside her? The child that you and she created...that your mate in her dying breath was desperate to save?"

Saying nothing, Harry just shook his head. His own tears streaking down his features, he finds himself looking at Alexandre and Sirius. Two men, who although for different situations, knew exactly what he was suffering,

"How...how do I live? How...?"

"One step at a time wolfing... and to not forget that there are others who are willing to help you when you feel down." Alexandre said quietly. The wolves were smiling at that as they listened. The older ones remember how depressed and how lonely their leader had been when his mate and child were killed. Many a time they found themselves just talking... Listening to his rambling about memories...

It helped Alexandre and his wolf to heal...and to move on...

Sirius nodded his head in agreement at this man's words and smiled sadly.

"And it will hurt for a long time Harry...the pain it never really goes away. But that's what the good memories are for Prongslet. Remember...remember how I told you I kept my mind in Azkaban?"

Nodding his head, Harry founds himself repeating what Sirius had told him over 10 years ago. "You told me...you just kept telling yourself...you were innocent...and that I was safe."

“Yes...now tell yourself this Harry. Live...don't live for us. Don't live for the job you must do. Live for yourself...and your son. Which by the way...can I be godfather again?”

Despite the pain of the day and of the situation, Harry immediately can't help but smile and laugh at the older man's comment. The others watching the laughter erupting from his lips give a small smile of hope.

“What! I'm serious!” Sirius chuckled. He knows that despite the pain his godson is feeling he needs to be happy and to be sane. And the only real medicine that he knows that works in cases like this...

Is laughter...

-8-

All right...next Chapter

Ginny awakes, Voldemort gloats...and rages.

Dumbledore asks for Harry via Ron to come and see him. To tell him something about a thing called...A Horcrux...

Chapter 55

Prison?

Ginny awakened to find herself in Azkaban and awaiting the kiss of any Dementor that remained there. Instead she finds herself looking at pale green colored walls and paintings of landscapes. Confused and wondering what was going on, as this was not her apartment, nor any place she recognized at first, the young woman was startled as a door opened behind her.

Turning around, the young woman gave a small sound of distress as someone she never expected to see stepped through the door.

“Ron...”

“Hello Ginny.”

Staring into the eyes of her elder brother, Ginny is stunned as a slap resounds across her cheek. Looking up into the angry brown eyes of her brother, the young woman is pulled up into a desperate hug only seconds later as if to be sure she was even there.

“Where have you been? And why...why were you with the Death Eaters?!”

Not really able to say anything, it was at that moment that Harry had come in. The red headed woman finds herself shivering somewhat in fear, as green eyes that once stared at her with warmth. Were now cold with anger and bitterness...

“He asks a valid question Ginny.” The dark haired man quietly. “I want to know why as well? Why were you with the Death Eaters?”

Turning around to look out the window, she manages to avoid the stares of Harry and her brother Ron, and all this time she says nothing.

Not one single word...

It is then that she hears a sigh of anger and frustration as Harry turns and walks away. She knows it is him, through the reflection his stance has in the window. Instinctively, she finds herself touching the retreating image, which says something quietly to Ron.

Although her older brother seems to be reluctant, he nods his head in acceptance...

"Ginny, Bill is on his way at the moment to tell Mum and Dad, where you were when you were found."

"Please don't Ron!"

"Why not?" The young man replied. His singular question was so honest and forthright to the point. That the young woman starts to answer but finds she can not. Instead, out of what has become a more recent habit, she rubs the spot where the dark mark resides. As if to will it off her body...

"Just please don't Ron..."

"Ginny, it's already being done." Ron said quietly. "You are lucky, that Harry's wife did what had done before he knew you were out there."

"What do you mean?" Ginny asked.

"Harry's wife...the woman who died was pregnant Ginny." Ron responded gently and yet with a pained anguish. "For that alone, Harry wants to kill you... and the problem is neither me nor Bill can really blame him. We do love you Ginny, it's just..."

"I see..." She whispered. "You don't want to risk alienating him again."

"It's not that Ginny...God. Put yourself in his shoes! He is finally getting back into his life and was happy. Despite everything he was happy and from what he had told me in his letters. It was thanks to her Ginny...it was thanks to Gabrielle Delacourt, she was there for him after what we did! After what we all did to him sans Remus! She listened! She believed! She trusted! And you and your new friends

took her away! You may not have done the actual deed but you did Ginny!”

“But what has that got to do with me?” She screamed. Her own confusion evident, it is a tense silence between the two siblings that is a result of this series of statements. Ones that speak truth...

In more ways then one...

Sighing as he is still confused and frustrated, he tells her what she wants to know. His words slow and steady, Ginny raises her hands to her mouth as she looks down at her belly. A belly that although flat at the moment, over time will give birth to a baby that is not hers...

But after what Gabrielle, Harry’s wife had done...

In a sense will be.

“Now do you understand at the moment, why you are not only alive, but Bill is on his way to tell Mum and Dad?” Ron whispered. “You were the only one, according to what Fleur explained whose magic could keep Harry and Gabrielle’s child alive. The baby is the only reason why he hasn’t gone ballistic and killed you. And the baby is also the reason why he hasn’t thrown you to the Aurors for trial.”

That said, Ron leaves her room, at the moment Tonks comes in. The auror looking at her with a mixture of disappointment and care, she proceeds to place a tray down with food and two potions for the young woman to take.

“Tonks I...”

“Don’t Ginny...” The auror replied quietly. “Right now, I’m just here to get you back to normal and to help you with the baby. Either myself or Fleur will check on you routinely, when Madam Pomphrey can’t get free.” The metamorphagus said softly.

“Tonks...”

“Ginny, don’t...just don’t. I’m supposed to tell you, that this is to be your room and that if you choose to leave it for anything, Marie will be your escort.” The auror stated as a smaller woman steps out from behind. Short dark hair and an elfish look to her body and features, one would be hard pressed not to notice the deadly intent in her stance.

Or the predatory glare from her blue flecked amber eyes...

“I see...I am a prisoner then?”

Saying nothing and just nodding her head, Tonks and the shifter walk out of the room. The hurt evident on the witch’s features as she had thought she knew this young woman. Despite the fact that Draco had told her, ages ago, she had never really believed it. I mean this young woman was someone whom she had hoped would take after her...

Someone who would enjoy life so much that she would wish to protect it... Much like how Madame Bones inspired her to be what she became.

But when she disappeared, well Tonks was heartbroken. Which causes her to stop even now, for if they had believed...

Ginny would be happy and probably learning under Tonks and Madame Bones. She might even have been married to Harry as many in the order had speculated. The relationship between the two of them had been close.

Now she wonders, and can’t help but be afraid to get close to the young woman for one main reason. Harry Potter himself...

He was already not taking the loss of Gabrielle not to well. According to Isabelle, the older woman finds herself singing him to sleep often. The nightmares since Gabrielle’s death have once again returned with a vengeance for Harry. Memories of the time in Azkaban that had not shown before were showing now with alarming speed.

It was like her death had broken a seal that had kept the bad dreams away for the young man. Gabrielle did so much... The savior of the

Wizarding world had succeeded in what he had done on his return only because of her.

Pausing for a moment as she runs into Remus, the wolf looks at his pity with the same gaze that she holds. One of extreme worry and hope...

"Do you think...he will want to leave us again?" Tonks whispered. "Despite everything, do you think he will regress?"

Taking her in his arms, the wolf mourns still for the loss of its young cub's mate. The little bird had been sweet and ever so kind and loving to its cubling, which the wolf knew was the cause of his returning to them all with time and patience on his own. But still, with her loss, it still will run deep and hard.

As much as the loss of its Stag and Flower pride mates had done that fateful day.

"All we can do is give him time Dora...time..." Remus whispered. "In the mean time we must get going. Harry wants us to come with him to see Albus."

"Why?"

"Albus has something he wishes to tell Harry, according to Bill. Knowing of Ron's tentative communication with Harry, Albus felt it was prudent to go through him and Bill rather than try and contact us directly, Fleur is right now tending to Pig who delivered the message to Ron." Remus chuckled wryly.

Smiling at the thought of the little hyperactive owl, that despite its age flies even more in a tizzy than ever, the auror follows her beloved wolf to where Harry waits. Together the three of them apparate out of the house, along with Isabelle...

Alexandre and Fleur remaining behind with the wolves, to not only protect but to keep an eye on their 'guest'. She was as of right now, the container to the key of Harry's sanity.

-8-

Elsewhere...

Voldemort was a mixture of two things. Although he can not break through this seemingly impenetrable wall that Potter had between them, he knew from the darkness of it, that the youth was not happy.

That is what thrilled him to no end. However losing Nagini? That was a problem...

She was one of his Horcruxes. With her dead, that proves another one is gone and this time he can not blame that damn order for it. Ever since that brat had disappeared that first time after his little play had ended. He was steadily losing them all one by one, thanks to the old coot.

He knows for a fact, that Dumbledore has the ring, and possibly the locket. But by this alone, the shield, diadem and cup are safe. Potter probably doesn't even know what he has within his own home...

Chuckling mirthlessly over that, he sends out another crucio to a new pet of his that the Dean Thomas had delivered for him to torture. He had hoped it would be one of Potter's companions. But this one would do in a pinch for now...

Shivering in fear, Cormac McLaggen wonders what he had done in this lifetime to merit such painful tortures.

In the meantime as they are forced to watch Draco looks to Snape, with worry in his gaze. Having heard that Ginny was captured only moments before, the subsequent ripping apart of Nagini by spells and wolves, the young Lord Malfoy was pensive to say the least.

He knew Harry from before, and knew how Harry had reacted. How he had felt at the death of his godfather Sirius Black. It was no secret to the Wizarding world, which it was at his death that many had thought he had snapped and killed people. When in fact he had not done such a thing...

Despite the destruction he had caused for some odd reason in Hogwarts, Harry was no willing killer back then. Draco and his godfather Snape knew the youth better probably then most in Hogwarts did.

There had been times when both men had something to the golden boy that would merit revenge of some sort against them from the youth. The snake incident from his second year, nearly destroyed Harry's life in their second year was thanks to Draco. And the Occulemency lessons before the death of Black?

Well needless to say even Snape remembers how bad that was...

At the moment, they were worried about Ginny. The young woman had made things bearable amongst the Death Eaters for both men. Even Voldemort himself, when he had heard of her capture was angry a little bit. For she had been something that had kept a certain member of his inner circle occupied with her mere presence.

Now?

That might prove difficult. Already Dean was asking to collect more muggles and experiment on their minds. He expressed his hopes and his desires to create new and more improved tortures upon them. He also hoped to somehow find a way to break Bellatrix out of her induced coma/torture from Harry and his fire.

Fire...that was one thing that Voldemort was still angry about... Once again at the battle in Godric's Hollow, the flame re-emerged from around him. Acting as a living shield many of the hexes bounced off the fire or ended up absorbed by them. In fact they even according to reports seem to spread to those shifters that were now on Harry's side.

Although he was smug that he had won, and that he with his presence had drawn them out. What those that survived the attacks had stated, each swipe of those claws from these wolves was like fire.

It burned...

In fact, among those who survived it felt like the way Harry had purified him out of his former minion Professor Quirrel all those years ago. This made him thoughtful... Supposedly according to his minions then, Voldemort believed it was love, it was the love of Potter's mudblood mother that protected him. Now he begins to wonder...was it something else? The rumors and his own little spies in the order tell him, that Potter is supposedly a phoenix Animagus according to what Dumbledore as well as the others believe.

Knowing that is impossible to be a magical Animagus, he finds himself thinking. This was also that annoying brat Potter he is wondering about. That same brat who at the age of 1 and a half deflected a killing curse...

"Snape!"

"Yes, my Lord..."

"Find me any and all information on the life and habits of phoenixes..." He demanded. "And take Draco with you. Between the both of you, you better not fail me."

"Yes, Lord Voldemort." Malfoy whispered.

"And Malfoy..."

"Yes my Lord...?"

"Crucio!" Voldemort stated with a smile on his face. "I do so miss hearing your screams. It brings back memories after all, of your inadequate father..."

Winching as Voldemort releases the curse; Draco walks away and out of sight before collapsing into the arms of his godfather. "Bringing him pets may not be enough soon, to keep him from us..."

-8-

Smiles happily as she wanders off to spend time packing and with a man she recently met...

Chapter 56

Thought

Ginny was solemn, as she stared out the window of her room. She can not call it a prison for that is indeed what it was not. But yet she could call it a jail, or even better yet as her mother would have put it when she was younger...

A grounding...

But this one would last for at least another 8 months. It has been at least two weeks since she had seen Harry and well she was mixture of emotions because of that. She knew it was his son, and that he according to Tonks has wanted to see the life inside her growing. Yet, she was the enemy in his eyes.

Never would she have thought that Harry, a man she has loved for so long would view her as an enemy. It was painful, and heartbreaking to say the least. She was accustomed to that warm light of his when he looked at her... And now?

Not even a glance as he has yet to see her.

Time has changed and certainly not for the better.

“What have I done?”

Turning back to sit upon the bed, where a tray of food and vitamins awaited her. Ginny reluctantly began to eat. To be honest even though she was not hungry, in a way she felt that to a degree she was being allowed a part of her childhood fantasy.

She was going to be the mother to Harry Potter's child.

Just not in the way she had hoped. Looking down at her belly, the red headed woman places her hand above the growing life within her. Tonks in her last visit had been gracious enough to tell her, what the baby's name would be.

James Sirius Potter...

A name that made her wonder, if the young baby inside her would look like his father...or would he take after his mother?

Speaking of which? Would it be her as the mother or still Gabrielle Delacourt? She did not quite understand the whole thing to be truthful. But what they had told her was right, that much she knew.

She was pregnant. She had watched as Madame Pomphrey had come and done diagnostic charms to check up on her as well as the baby's progress. Heck she even knew the spells by heart to do them as she had often helped Snape heal those Voldemort had punished for failures...

There was life inside her and for the first time Ginny found she was terrified. Because this time...she was not in control of her own fate. And yet, she was the key to the fate of another. One that could determine the fate of her world should the child within her live...

Or die...

-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-

At this moment, Harry was contemplating homicide of one exuberant Wolf leader named Alexandre. The wolf having received reports from those he had sent with Remus and himself, the older man was eager to battle the young man despite all that had occurred.

And although he was not too thrilled with the idea, Harry couldn't help but agree. A fight was what he needed...

During his time with the wolves, what he had come to appreciate, was their way of dealing with issues. Instead of words, which were used from time to time, it was more or less by combat that things were settled. Isabelle had said at once before he, Tonks, Remus, Fleur, and Gabrielle had left France for England...

We shifters have learned that although we are human we are animal as well. Humans use words to fight. Animals? Well... they use teeth and claws...

Teeth and claws...

He may not have either at their kind of level, but he had enough to make himself known to them. Alexandre was helping him work out many of the things that had been troubling him lately. The main issue right now was his need to kill something, or should we say someone by the name of Ginny Weasley.

It was entirely unlike him...but yet.

The rage was there.

He and Gabrielle had so much that they were going to do. So much...

WHACK

A loud yelp of surprise passes his lips as Alexandre sweeps Harry's legs out from under him.

Retaliating with a side kick, Harry gets rid of his errant thoughts as he Alexandre blocks it with ease.

The young man and the wolf leader battling it out, neither of them notice the small group of loved ones gathering together around one man in particular. The only one whom besides Alexandre can understand Harry in the pain he is feeling.

Sirius Black...

"How's he been doing Padfoot." Asked Remus quietly, the knowledge that his dearest friend had somehow come back from the dead was indeed surprising when he had found out as well as others weeks ago. He was startled and in shock as were Tonks and the others who knew him well. But unlike others in the Order, they to like Harry, have picked up some things from the Wolves.

Control was something that they had learned and learned well.

They knew that then was not the time to harass Sirius about his return. All they knew was that he had done so and that they were grateful for it. There were things that although Harry looked to Remus as an adoptive father. Sirius was someone who much like Harry had experienced a childhood he would rather forget. He had known the feelings of loss and pain to such an extreme that if anyone could understand him.

It was the so called white sheep of the Black family.

Between the two men as well as Alexandre and his mother Isabelle. Harry would remain sane if they had anything to say about it.

THUD

SMACK

CRASH

"He's still the same." Sirius says quietly. "The visions have him tossing and turning, its only when he shifts to the Phoenix form does it stop to allow him rest."

"Didn't he adapt it to his system earlier some of the phoenix aspects?" Tonks interrupted. "He told us he did it for his sight to help him see without his glasses..."

"I think he tried. It's just with everything happening."

"He can't focus."

Nodding his head reluctantly, Sirius looks back to the beating his godson is taking. Words only said that previous night entering his mind.

"Sirius...why? Why can't I save the ones I love?"

The older man looks over at his godson. It is the first time that the young man has actually voluntarily said something that did not have to be coerced out of him.

“Why? Why can’t I do it?”

“I don’t know Prongslet. I often wonder the same things myself.” The former dead man replied. Ever since his release, from that limbo, his body has been working towards his real age steadily... Now his formally pure black hair had a couple of streaks of silver in it around his temples. And his dark eyes had almost permanent etchings of age and stress around them... a far different cry from when he was younger...

“That’s not an answer.”

Sirius looks at Harry with a quiet and yet sad expression. “I know...but it’s the only one I got, Harry.”

Looking back on it, if Harry was to ask him it now, Sirius would have an answer to give him. Four simple words that could do either one of two things...

Help him understand

Or destroy him

Because no matter how hard you try, you can’t fight fate.

SMACK

CRASH

THUD

WHACK

Before anything else can happen to break him further, Harry needs something...anything to bring him back around. To give him the hope that he so desperately needs.

-8-

Was originally going to be something else all entirely but was talking with my brother and he gave me the idea for this which I liked better.

Anyhow people I am back and sorry but moving had taken a bit longer then I thought. We still have stuff in storage that I have to go and get eventually. But at the moment no room to put the items in it...groans...

But at least got my internet up!

Chapter 57

Nowhere Fast

England

6 months later...

Ginny mourned the fact that in these six months since her supposed incarceration. Not once has Harry really been there to see her. Actually...he as been to see her, just he wasn't seeing her.

Knowing how forgiving he was as a youth when they were all in school. She would have thought that with their shared past, that Harry would have gotten over it. Especially now that she was heavy with his son...

But it wasn't the case. Instead he distanced himself even further; he kept going out with the wolves and stopping some of the major battles from escalating to monstrous proportions.

Her pleas for him to treat her as he once did had fallen on death ears. Ron and others had started to plead her case especially when little James had started to talk to her.

Flashback three months earlier...

Crying in her room from suffering another bout of unbearable silence as Harry had entered her room once again. Ginny had collapsed upon her bed, clutching her swollen belly protectively. Despite herself knowing that this baby was not originally hers to begin with, she had grown attached to the little boy within her.

So when she started hearing sounds of a little boy whispering all around her. She was admittedly confused...

Mommy?

"What?"

Mommy sing?

“James?”

Yes Mommy? Mommy sing?

Flashback ends

It was then that she had gotten up and immediately asked for not only Madame Pomphrey and Fleur.

After telling both women what had happened when they came, Fleur had reluctantly smiled. She was upset that her nephew was considering this woman his mother, but yet seeing how Ginny had been confused and wondering what she should do.

Fleur as Madame Pomphrey proceeded to check her out set about not only teaching Ginny a childhood song. A favorite of Gabrielle's growing up, but also to explain that everything was all right.

When Veelas have children, eventually when the child spirit awakens into its forming body, it begins to ask things of its mother. Things like a simple song, a touch or even something that would make even the sanest wizard throw up as Ginny nearly did twice.

Twice the little boy had asked for meat, to the point that it was bloody and barely cooked. Fleur had warned her the first time that she tried to refuse that the baby within her could work havoc upon her body.

She wasn't kidding. Her hair and body turned wild colors for days and not to mention she could keep nothing down. James refused all foods until he got what he wanted from her. In the end, though it was thanks to her mother that had found a recipe to make her able to eat it that helped James settle down.

Yes, Harry had allowed Molly Weasley back into his life somewhat. Not like Ron, who as he and Harry had reached the point of being good friends it had stagnated a little bit. Because...

Well because that there were some things Harry still had trouble forgiving. But unlike others according to Tonks who had begun talking to her again recently. Ron was willing to wait.

And he did. Time after time, he was patiently rewarded as he gave Harry each and every time a chance to make the first move. To allow him back into Harry's life and to also be able to help him. Help him as he could not before, help him to defeat a nightmare that would not go away.

Her brother had changed. Molly had not apparently. She had immediately started to try and fawn over Harry but he had shot it down faster then one could blink. And it apparently had hurt even more, when her mother had met Isabelle.

When Molly had met Isabelle, well it was significant to say the least. Because as Harry was guiding her mother to her, Molly was witness to the warmth and adoration that the young man once had for her. Was now given to this other woman...

Flashback... Two months ago...

"Mum?"

"Hello Ginny." Molly stated quietly. Sadness and longing in her tone, as familiar laughter erupts from down the hall. "He has what he needs now doesn't he?"

Confused for a moment, the youngest and yet the most perceptive of the Weasley clan reluctantly nods her head. "From my short time here and what little I have seen he does Mum. And we have no one to blame but ourselves."

"I know...it's just..."

"Just what?"

"Just why couldn't he go back to being as he was before?"

"Because he changed...and we didn't"

Flashback ends

It all came down to that one word. Change...

Change was something that everyone has to do sooner or later. You can't remain the way you were the day before because somewhere somehow, you did something that made you different for the next day. And unfortunately if you cause people to be hurt during that change it can do things later on that are hard to forget.

Those words that Isabelle had told her in the beginning echoed with her for a long time. Because of what they had done, the boy that had been fated to be their hero had endured things that hurt him. Things that even though most could forget, he could not...

And she understood that day finally. So when Harry came back with the others doing what he needed to do, to thwart Voldemort time and time again. She waited patiently. She did not push him to talk to her anymore. She allowed him to touch her belly, and to hear the movements of the child within her.

Eventually, maybe and even though it won't be as they could have been years ago. Maybe Harry will truly see her once again.

-8-

Sirius chuckled as Harry was tackled by some of the wolves around the Hollow. Enjoying the six months he has had back among those he loves, he had become a fixture of laughter around the house. It was something that he excelled at in these dark times.

Making people laugh...

Between himself and Alexandre's rigorous training schedule as the Wolf Pack leader had decided to stay alongside his mother. They had kept Godric's Hollow full of love and laughter. Not allowing Harry to sink into the oblivion that rock his dreams during the night.

The connection between himself and Voldemort had most definitely re-opened and both parties knew it. But unlike the snake, Voldemort delighted in torturing his godson as he slept. After all an off kilter Harry made an enemy he could handle.

And although they had won several of the skirmishes with the Death Eaters, it was proving to be a stalemate time and time again. Unlike that first battle, according to Remus, it seemed Harry was holding back.

Sirius for once was thankful, that Remus had tried to fulfill his wish, that he look after Harry in the event of his death. It had bonded the older man and the youth who so desperately needed a stabilizing influence.

Where he was the father who provided the love and the laughter that kept him happy, Remus was the father who kept him sane. Whose words made him think... And it was both men who accepted him no matter what alongside Isabelle and Alexandre. To them he was just Harry.

Which brings us to the meeting that had been coming up...a meeting that he himself was not to thrilled on going to.

It was a meeting that was long overdue, because several times Harry had put it off. For some odd reason or another he had kept fighting the desire to go.

Isabelle was the one who had figured out. It was Isabelle, who had put Harry's reactions into perspective...

How would you feel if the one whom you thought would believe you, was the one who allowed you to be taken? How would you feel if he all of a sudden wanted to see you again?

Understanding that sentiment, they all said nothing. After all, as Ron had put it eloquently, look how long it took him to accept him back as a friend?

Now Harry had felt comfortable about seeing Dumbledore again. But unlike before he would not be going in his Phoenix form. He would be going as himself and not alone. Alexandre as well as he and Remus would be there with him.

It was Harry's condition.

He would not be guilt-tripped into being something he is not.

TBC...

Chapter 58

A Meeting

Harry was reluctant to enter the offices of his one time mentor. Albus Dumbledore was someone that the young man, long ago would have done just about anything for. He was someone whom had tried to give Harry advice, had helped him out when no one else would and so forth.

Yet, the fact of the matter is, is that he did nothing to prove Harry's innocence. Causing said youth to spend a year in hell, that although he does not remember it all that well. The dreams...the dreams that Voldemort has delighted in sending him brought them back every night.

Walking into the once proud gates of his one true home as a child, he observed that where Hogwarts had shown brightly. It seemed dark to a degree, lacking the life that once roamed its halls. That life was still there, but it was quieter...more subdued.

Sirius who had not been back since his supposed death was the first to voice his thoughts. Thoughts that were agreed with by Remus as well...

Their former school was dying.

"It's so silent..."

"War would do that Mr. Black..."

Startled by the familiar female voice up in front of them, Sirius and the others find Hermione Granger standing in front of them. But unlike before when all those save Alexandre knew her...she appears far older. Her brown hair albeit tamed and not as bushy was beautifully and coiled in a loose braid. It was her eyes though...eyes that instead of a woman in her early 20's...

You could and would see someone old...and so very tired.

“Wow...you look ancient.”

Out of habit, Remus smacks, Sirius upside the back of his head. The almost familiar gesture causes those around to smile. Especially the young woman, whose eyes rest on the young man amongst them. “It is nice to see you again Harry.”

Harry says nothing, and just stares at his former friend in response. The coolness in his gaze unnerving to say the least, she knows and feels the guilt from years before creeping up on her. Even Albus at first believed in Harry’s innocence, he had continued to believe until Minerva in her rage had convinced him otherwise. I mean Minerva was a teacher, a logical and practical one that Hermione had hoped to emulate someday in her skills...

But...Harry was her friend. The first friend she ever really had alongside Ron. Being the bookworm of the school, she was often ostracized because of her smarts. But Harry, he had made it seem not so bad. And she betrayed that trust.

It’s just... they were children that the Dark Lord killed in Harry’s guise. Young innocent children, she couldn’t help but believe that he had done it. Who wouldn’t right? The evidence was all there!

She was wrong though.

She was once someone whom Harry, might have thought would save him. Would prove that he was innocent...never before has the guilt felt so strong.

“Where is Headmaster Dumbledore?”

Wincing at the almost coldness that lies within his voice, Hermione simply gestures towards the Headmaster office. As the men stride by and enter Hogwarts, the Castle seems to glow with life albeit only a little bit again. The light hearted bickering between the four, sounded warm and inviting and so full of happiness...

Hermione started to cry, that she was no longer a part of it.

Following behind them, she simply thought on what she had lost. What Ron was slowly regaining and not her. She had been begging Ron for weeks, weeks to take her with him, when he was invited to spend time with Harry. But reluctantly, he had to tell her no...

'Mione...if you can't figure out why... Harry won't see you.

But Ron...

Look Hermione, I grew up. Why can't you?

That had rankled her nerves, it had rankled her to the point that once again she was refusing to speak to him. But the fact of the matter is, as Harry point blank is ignoring her that maybe...Ron was right. The one who was the most immature of the three of them had grown up.

She should be proud...but she was hateful. She was supposed to be the one Harry had turned to not him. She was the logical one, the most mature out of all three when they were at Hogwarts. Not Ron!

But the proof was right there in front of her eyes. Ron, having been placed as an ambassador of sorts to Harry's small group was greeted warmly by the men. Words being spoken, she could see that light of friendship sparking between him and the other men made her jealous.

It is amazing how much he has grown don't you think? We ghosts have often wondered whether or not that phoenix light would ever be released. Now that we see that it has been all is right now...

Just looking at the ghost of Nearly Headless Nick, in surprise, the normally smart bookworm just gapes in awe.

What?

"How...how did you know?"

Nick just looks at her and says three words before he floats away.

You never asked

-8-

As he approached the office of one who was once his mentor to not just himself, but to his godfather and honorary father. Harry allowed Alexandre to step forward. It was agreed that the werewolf, who has proven more than a match to Harry's powers should go forth first.

Despite having no magic for which to claim, Alexandre had sheer power. In a curious experiment, two months ago, save the killing curse it was found that the wolf leader could indeed throw off most magic as if it was nothing. And considering it was Harry throwing the curses at him...

That was saying a lot.

Isabelle explained it best...

Wolves have strength to protect those they love with sheer determination. You have stories of wolves killing bears to protect but one cub. I know you have heard stories of wolves attacking humans to feed those in their packs.

It is the same with shifter prides... We may be human, but we are wolf as well.

So if the desire is strong enough the power of the wolf can fight anything. Even torture... It wants to live. It must live...

It explained why Remus had survived for so long against Greyback. The latter having wished Remus gone for the supposed betrayal years ago to the light, why Remus was as strong as he was. Moony, the wolf inside was not going to die if he could help it.

Now entering the room, that the last time he was within was years ago. Harry was amazed by how much and yet at the same time how little it has changed.

Most of the magical gadgets were still there but it was the paintings that had changed. The headmasters were still chatting and giving

greetings as they had done so before. But now it was to deliver information, or to tell what they have learned.

“Nice to see you again Harry...”

Looking at the old man in irritation, not only is Harry shocked. But so are Sirius and Remus... Before Albus Dumbledore looked like a man in his 50-60's. Now he did look old, for older then his supposed age of 75 now and so very tired.

Alexandre at this moment as well as Remus sniffs the air and as he looks at the elderly wizard he says something that throws everyone into a state of shock.

“You are dying old man. There is a stink of death around you...”

Startled by this, Remus himself having taken whiff nods his head in surprise as Moony almost whines with loss. Although both halves are angry at this old wizard for the mistakes of the past, there are still memories of the only home he had ever had thanks to the same man...

“Yes...unfortunately I am. It is part of the reason why I have asked you here.”

“What do you mean Headmaster?” Harry asked. He was still somewhat reeling over this bit of news. Albus Dumbledore...was dying?

“Harry what do you know of Horcruxes?”

About to respond, it is Remus this time that pales at those words. Looking at the man, with something akin to fear, the Wolf wizard speaks. “Albus are you telling us...is that why?”

Nodding his head reluctantly, Albus confirms it. “Yes I have confirmed it through my sources. It is why Voldemort has not been killed. He has created Horcruxes. Seven by my count...”

Confused even more so, Remus looks to Harry and explains what they are.

“Harry... a Horcux is something that can only be created by splitting one’s soul into pieces...usually by committing murder. As long as even a sliver resides within the body, one can in a sense become immortal.”

Paling in shock, Harry glares at Albus now with irritation as well as that same gaze as he did long ago when he had thought his beloved godfather dead.

“So when the prophecy was still active from before? How the hell did you expect me to kill someone who can not be killed?”

Wincing a little bit at the anger in the eyes of one he once regarded as family, Albus sinks back into his chair. “Before I was not to sure, but unfortunately...after what had happened with you I had come across information describing the rituals to create one. Rituals that seemed all too familiar from back before the first war... That is when I asked Severus to look into it...”

“How is Professor Snape?” Harry asked. Knowing the older man was a spy he was admittedly worried despite the animosity between them.

“He is fine for right now Harry. Within the last couple of months though he has confirmed my suspicions... I have recently begun searching for what I believed to be the items containing Voldemort’s soul. Three of them I believe were destroyed...”

“What were they?”

“I believe one is something you would recognize...” Albus replied as he looked at Harry. Within moments, he brings out, a book that although he had last seen it in the hands of Lucius Malfoy, it was there in its ruined glory.”

“The Diary?”

“Yes...and I also believe that this is one Sirius might recognize...as well as the note that was within it.”

Startled to say the least as Dumbledore hands him a locket and a preserved piece of paper. He pales as he recognizes the locket that his mother when he was child raved about finding.

Looking at the note, he reads what is it and starts to shed tears...

“My brother?”

“Yes, it seems young Regulus Black had succeeded in destroying that part of Voldemort’s soul. In retaliation...Voldemort killed him leading me to believe what the third one was that he destroyed but never realized.”

All are confused for a moment as Dumbledore stares at Harry. The others in the room are confused at Dumbledore’s words. But it is Alexandre who speaks up now as he figures it out...”

“Harry, Remus, and Sirius told me about these dementors per say and they suck out the soul of those they kiss. They succeeded in kissing Harry didn’t they? They just took the wrong soul.”

His head nodding in agreement with Alexandre’s words, Albus looks at the said young man with an almost quiet gaze. “I believe in a way you should be thankful to the dementors for doing what they did Harry...”

“How so?” Sirius asks in anger. “How can we be thankful for Harry being kissed?!”

“Because Mr. Black... I have reason to suspect after talking with Harry and Ron, that it might be why Harry had difficulty achieving the form. Without the dementor’s kiss I do believe young Harry would have most assuredly died...”

Chapter 59

Light and Dark

“What the hell do you mean?! Why should we be thankful that Harry was all but killed thanks to a dementor?” Sirius ranted. Having been regaining mass as well as muscle thanks to the efforts of Alexandre and Isabelle, he looked as he should have been if he had never gone to Azkaban in the eyes of not only Dumbledore but others who have entered as well.

Minerva having come, she had frozen at the sight of her former students as well as each a former Gryffindor themselves. Two of them she had condemned because of proof that at first seemed overwhelming, and found guilty. But it was the same two that time and time again had proven to be her pride and joy.

Carrying books from Madam Pince, who despite her advanced years was still librarian of Hogwarts, she had come in with these books as references for Albus. Knowing what he is about to tell her former students. She waits for the inevitable explosion that is to come. Even she herself had trouble believing it was real...

“Do bear with me a moment Mr. Black. But this much I can tell you. I have often wondered why in those years he was here, that Harry never displayed any magic past that of a normal youth his age. He was supposed to be marked as an equal to Voldemort, yet he had average power. So I wondered...often during those years.”

“What has that got to do with me?” Harry interrupted, his green eyes blazing with anger. “How the hell is a dementor kissing me a good thing?”

Holding up his hand as the others, shoot questions towards him. Minerva steps forward and murmuring a spell a loud shot is heard that silences the room.

“Thank you Minerva.” Dumbledore smiled in gratitude of what she had done. The older woman nodding her head, she sighs in sorrow as a look of hatred crosses the young Potter’s features.

“The reason why I believe it was a good thing is, because since I learned of you being a phoenix Animagus it has brought my attention to a couple stories from a long time ago concerning Fawkes’s brethren.”

Watching as the old wizard opens one of the many books Minerva had brought him, the others remain silent. Curious to a fault as to what is going on, it takes about 10 minutes before Albus finds what he seeks.

Turning it around, his fingers point to statements made in the book, Remus understanding takes it within his hands and begins to read.

When it comes to magic there are indeed aspects of it that can be considered pure light and pure dark. Although spells that are said have the same effect regardless of who casts them. It is the core of which we refer to of human and creature alike.

Phoenix’s for example are the purest forms of life hence they are often termed as a light creature. Whereas the Basilisk is considered the purest form of Darkness...

One can heal with its blood.

The other can poison...

Exact opposites... The results in experiments conducted on why the essential parts can not be used in combinations of wand makings was this.

They would CANCEL each other out. The power of both such magical creatures of opposite ends of the spectrum can exist in the same body. But the magic they would give would be countered each time by the other.

Remove one part of the essence, would allow that side to grow stronger.

Silence was all that was heard for moments on end. Thoughts drifting to those words, Sirius looks at Harry who finds himself albeit still confused. Finding that he could not argue what it said...

"Voldemort's symbol has always been that of a serpent. The Basilisk is said to kill with a single stare or even a drop of its poison with the body. And yet in my second year I survived for longer and with far more than a drop, before Fawkes healed me."

The others listening as Harry speaks; it begins to dawn on them as to what Harry is referring to.

"But ever since the kiss... I have felt stronger. More able to take on things and not feel like I am fighting something constantly to cast even the simplest of spells." The young man said quietly. "What that book has written down it makes sense...my dark abilities versus my light core...everything."

This had caused even more silence to be in the room as the youth's words sink into them.

"Harry..." Remus said quietly. His eyes taking on a fatherly stance as he and Sirius both gaze at him, to study his reaction.

"It's all right Remus." The dark haired young man replied. His green eyes looking at the old wolf with visible fondness that Dumbledore can't help but feel a twinge of jealousy. It is an emotion that he has not been proud of since, realizing that the position he desires so much in this young man's life was filled by others. Harry does turn to him as he once did according to what he has allowed Ron to tell him.

Instead he turns to his late father's friends. And the new ones he has made in the foreign pack...Where he and the Order was once his family.

Now they no longer are...

"How...though...how could this happen? I mean wouldn't he have known what he done when he killed Lily and James."

“Accidental.”

Startled by his voice speaking up, the others look at Sirius as Alexandre smiles darkly and nod his head in agreement. “Harry and Remus had told me of how your pups sometimes in great feats of emotion let out bursts of magic. Sometimes adults can do it to...”

Confused and about ready to protest, Alexandre explains to those listening about Harry’s loss of control that one night. A loss that makes the others think past to those they know.

“One time...my mother was mad.” Remus replied quietly. “I had just changed for the first time and already someone had tried to kill me. Her magic went crazy... it lashed out.”

Nodding his head Sirius mentions similar incidents, when he and his mother had fought. Despite being 17 and a half years old at the time and then 20 years old, both times he had let out bursts of uncontrolled magic that were potentially hazardous to those he cared about.

As thoughts dwell darkly, it is thanks to Ron that smiles appear moments later...

“Blimey...the Dementor did save you after all then Harry. When it kissed you it just took the wrong soul... Won’t You-know-who be tickled pink when he hears his own pets saved you!” Ron spoke up for the first time since the meeting had begun. His comment had the intending affect that the young man wished for.

It made the others laugh...

Laughter was a great healer in times of darkness. Not a single one person in that room knew that as it died down and they listened to what Dumbledore was requesting of them...that the Darkness was only beginning.

Especially as Sirius was asked to do something that normally any Dark Wizard would jump at the chance to. But was acknowledged

instead by the foreign wolf, which as he listened interrupted before the words could be spoken...

“So Dumbledore, other than finding these Horcruxes you talk about, when do you want us to kill you? Now or Later...?”

Chapter 60

Elder Wand...Part 1

Startled by the outrageous statement, that Alexandre has made, Minerva as well as Ron were about to argue this, when they found Albus was not laughing. Was not telling them that it was a joke, and judging by the fact he was nodding his head as if in agreement to the wolf's words.

Well all hell was just about to break loose...

"Albus surely he is not right! I mean, you can't want them to kill you!"

"Minerva...in getting that locket, I essentially became dead to the world. We lost one of our own, whom I had asked to help me in the fetching of it." The older man said sadly.

"You mean?"

Nodding his head, Minerva lets out a sound of sadness. Not to long ago, far before the return of Harry, Albus and Kingsley Shacklebolt had gone somewhere. And Kingsley...

The tall black auror never returned. A good man to say the least, he was missed greatly as he was a valuable asset to the failing side of Light. A good man to say the least, losing him had indeed been hard on all of them.

"But why...how..."

Albus responded with one word. One that sent shivers down the spines of all but Alexandre in the room.

"Inferi"

At that moment, Harry's power fluxed. Despite the trial and everything, that brief time despite his belief in Harry's guilt. Kingsley had been kind while in Azkaban. Even many of the Death Eaters in the jail appreciated the measures he took to keep them from starving.

All though the bread and gruel was lousy at least it was fresh.

Unlike most of the others in the Ministry, who treated the prisoners with disdain. At least eh had made them feel something of human.

To be killed by what is virtually the undead?

"Voldemort traps them don't they...?" Harry muttered as his green eyes glared with an almost inhuman light. The fire having died down, the others were immediately wary. Albeit a Phoenix Animagus and something of light, Harry had lived far to long with that aspect of Voldemort within him.

Although it is gone, to much has been integrated into Harry's life. If there was ever an in-between classification of wizardry it would be Harry now. Light core...dark mind...

Or a Grey Wizard

Dumbledore nods his head sadly in response. "I believe so Harry..." The older man said sadly as he sank into his chair. "The traps on the locket were to complex. To difficult to comprehend, to get the locket...one had to endure them all as the other person would be suffering to hold the traps at bay. But we also knew the way Voldemort did them as we detected."

Pausing as he had to answer it was Harry who figured out. "It took longer then what you could hold didn't it? Kingsley was not a young man, he took to long. He gave you what you wanted..."

"But he died in the process, as I to be now dying. The potion was poisonous that I was required to take to hold them back as long as I have. Hermione had been gracious enough to find a potion to prolong my life as long as it has been."

"SHE KNOWS!"

"She does indeed Minerva, Sirius." Dumbledore said quietly. "She was the one who in fact volunteered herself that day. But with

Severus being more and more forced to stay by Voldemort's side. She is the only one whom I could trust do brew the potions should anything happen alongside Madame Pomphrey. Severus provided her with notes, she did the brewing."

"But Albus why? Why do you want us to kill you?" Remus asked with a calm voice. He was still shock, from this recent revelation as were the others. "And even then, if you wanted to die, why not simply kill yourself."

"Because I have something in my possession that would not allow it Remus, something that should he find out. Could turn the tides quite easily..."

"Which is what?" Ron asked. Despite agreeing with many things each person in the room had said, even Minerva was startled at this information that implied so much as to what Albus had been keeping.

"What do you all know of the Tales of Beetle the Bard?"

Confused for a moment, as Harry has a puzzled expression on his features, Remus speaks up. "The children's fairy tale? The one about the three brothers and the deal they made with the devil? The stick that never loses, the stone that sees death and the cloak of stealth...?"

"Indeed"

"Albus that is just a story? Isn't it?" Sirius worded carefully. But as the elderly wizard shakes his head he looks at Harry with a sad gaze. Bringing out his wand and placing it before them along with a scrap of a familiar material, which George had allowed him to take as he kept the rest.

"Forgive me Harry, perhaps if I had not asked your father for it. He and your mother might have stood a chance."

Chapter 61

Elder Wand Part 2

Confusion on the faces of all those within the room, Albus turns away in shame. "Some things happened in my past, which I am not proud of. Needless to say I had thought that maybe, just maybe with something called the Deathly Hallows, I could fix it. This was long before I had become Headmaster of Hogwarts, and it is also a reason why I and Aberforth had not spoken for as long as we have. For you see I had a sister."

Startled by this, Harry albeit still confused asks something that is at the foremost of his mind. "What does this have to do with the story?"

Giving a wry laugh, Albus turned back to look at all involved, especially Harry. "Remember the mirror of Erised, Harry? Remember when I told you I could see through most invisibility spells?"

Nodding his head, Harry says nothing as the others look at him in confusion. It is only Ron and Hermione, who gaze upon their friend sadly and with memories.

"I was lying Harry. It takes a lot of concentration to sense it. For, you see I had actually detected you through the wards I had placed at that moment. But before I go any further, it is best I start from something of a beginning."

"All right..." The only Potter stated quietly, as he looked at the elderly figure in the chair.

"I had often wondered when I saw your father, as well as Sirius and Remus using your cloak, why it was I could not see through it. It led me to remember of my sister and something I had in my possession. Something to this day, that Aberforth and I do not speak of."

"Which was?" Alexandre asked. Despite not understanding any of this gibberish in his opinion, this was something that the Wolf inside him sensed needed to be told. Needed to be shared to move on...

“Something happened to her years ago. It was something that muggle or wizard like, should not happen to any woman. It broke her. It broke her to the point that her mind was not there anymore. And you all know what happens with untrained magic...”

Eyes widening with clear precision, as the revelation appears. For something like this, well more often the child's magic was bound. But that had only been going on recently, years ago...

“Albus...what did you do?” Minerva whispered.

“It's not what I did, that you should be asking Minerva. You should be asking what Grindewald and I did.”

Speaking now, the small group pales at what they hear their most beloved headmaster of their childhood's reveal to them. Each, spell, each experiment, everything...

When he was done an hour or so later, Sirius who was pale said something, that for the first time, even Minerva could not argue with. “I need a drink...”

“I believe it is time for a break then. Allow me to ask the house elves to bring us food and drink.”

Fire Whiskey was stated unanimously by all those in the room save Minerva. The older woman already knowing she was going to drink plenty of it looked at Albus with eyes that were filled with pain.

“Albus...why?” She said so quietly, as the older wizard approached her, which he had to actually strain himself to hear.

“If you could bring back the mind, the soul of someone you loved? Wouldn't you try?”

Hearing those words, Minerva shook her head quietly. “No I wouldn't.” She replied softly. Accepting a bottle from one of the four elves summoned, she took a long deep drink of the burning liquid down her throat. “The dead need to stay as they are. It is their rest...let them live in memories, let them bodies die in peace.”

Somehow, her words seem to surprise the older wizard. Fawkes letting out a mournful sound of agreement with her words, for despite it all, Albus still does not feel enough has been forgiven despite all that he has done for the children during this war.

To him the dead are still alive regardless of what has happened...

Looking toward the others in the room, he is needless to say proud of the Weasely. Unlike many other of the Order, including the two women, most were still intent that Harry was still the same. Still the innocent boy that needed protection...

The one woman's eyes were starting to see. And by the sad gaze on the eyes of the young Granger woman, she was now thinking as she should have been long ago.

He was not just any phoenix. He was one of the first after all and he has lived a long time. He could sense the darkness that had been rising within his friend since that night, he went with the other. It was a type though that even he could not heal, like he had done years ago for the young one.

This type fed on his very life to feed its own. And more and more as of late, Albus had needed near double the amount of regular potions to stay off the pain its devouring was bringing him.

That was disturbing to say the least.

Now as they eat and drink, they try to forget what they had just heard. If only for a few moments...

But as they quiet down once more, one thing that has been bugging them all, was why Albus had told them this story in the first place.

"Headmaster, what has that got to do with a children's story? Or even moreso what does it have to do with my mum and dad?" Harry had to ask as the Headmaster returned to his seat. The house elves fussing over him, as they themselves have long since sensed the emanate demise of the one whom has treated them with love.

“There have been invisibility cloaks before made by wizard kind Harry. But something about your father’s felt different. Older magic was stronger. Much like my wand...”

Confused, still it is Alexandre whom approaches the wand and sniffs it cautiously. At the same time moving his nose, over the delicate material, he reaches into his pocket and brings out a stone encased in a pendant.

“My wife...before Greyback...said this had been passed down in her family since before they became shifters and joined our pride. She told me of the power this was supposed to have alongside two other objects. The story she told me was one that I remembered from the Brother’s Grimm fairy tales. It smells of old power, much like that stick of yours and this scrap of cloth...and it something she told me that must always be protected.”

The three together began to almost seemingly resonate with old magic, magic that Harry himself felt calling to him and as he touched what was left of his old cloak. It began to glow, filling the office with its warmth, when it dies, that which once belonged to his father had been restored. Surprising all but Alexandre, who had suspected it.

“How...?”

“Old magic is something us shifters on the mainland know much of.” Alexandre said quietly. “The fact that according to Remus, there is a lot about shifters you and those in this hidden world, leads me to belief that somewhere you lost that understanding. You do not control the magic. The magic controls you.”

Ready to protest that belief, Alexandre holds up his hand, revealing the true power, that only Remus and Harry and more recently Sirius have seen hints of at his disposal. Ron and the others, who have not felt it balked. Their fear evident in their eyes...

“How?”

“You may be wizards, but you are human. You fear what you can not understand. And although I and Remus are shifters, what made us in the beginning is old magic. Magic that is very much alive.”

About to protest that belief that something that can not be touched is alive. Hermione is halted by a hand on her arm from Minerva as Harry speaks.

“That...makes sense. I had often wondered with the wands of our cores whether or not something that was taken from another would still retain its magic. Although Fawkes’s feather was in my wand, does it still retain its magic? Or is the magic simply being channeled through it?”

“And you would be correct Harry, it is through creatures such as Fawkes and our Wolf friends here, that we are able to use the magic we are blessed with.” Albus said quietly. “It is something all wizards know but will deny.”

“But why deny what is true?” Hermione blurted out.

“Because they won’t feel as powerful...” Ron worded softly in response. “Power is a thing many want and few are willing to share. To know that those creatures are needed would make many angry and upset, because they have this belief that the magical creatures are not needed, for they actually have the power and not them. Remember Umbridge?”

Somehow Ron’s words, hushed the young woman who looked at him with surprise.

“Ron...”

“He’s changed Hermione.” Harry stated quietly, much to the surprise of all listening, at his defense of one who betrayed him as many others had done. “He realized that things can not be as they were. There is too much in the past for everything to be forgotten... or even forgiven.”

“Harry...then why...”

“Because we began with a clean slate Hermione, I realized that Harry and I are not the same people. The people we used to be are dead, because of a mistake we helped to perpetuate whether we knew it or not. We are new...so why not start all over again.” Ron replied as he spoke up. The tone of his voice, sending the message home now into the young woman’s mind...

They have changed.

Albus was proud as he listened to the words being spoken. Maybe...just maybe all though they can not be as close as they all once were, they can all be friends again. Death or not, he wishes to live long enough to see that if it all possible. But now...to get back to why they had all gathered...

“Even though I would like to talk more on that, one of these hallows is something Harry, that Voldemort would like to get his hands on.”

“The wand old man.” Alexandre responded as he stepped forward. “My mate told me the story often enough to know what you are referring to. One of the three brothers in the tale supposedly had a weapon that was given to him. A weapon, which can never be defeated...”

“Yes. My wand is the reason I have kept Voldemort at bay when we have battled over the years Harry. I have the Elder wand from the story, just as his wife had the stone...and your father had the cloak.”

Chapter 62

Elder Wand Part 3

Those words had made all those within the room think. If what he had said was true, then the light did indeed have something of an advantage over the dark that has been hidden all those years.

Many speaking up, over the object of the wand, it is Harry who asks that which is relevant.

“Why? Why these items...and why this wand in particular?”

“Priori incantum.”

Confused for a moment, the older man smiles as he explains, “It is not the cloak or the stone he is after Harry. It is the wand. Because your wands are both a part of Fawkes, anytime the two of you should duel. You would be dead even. No losers, no winners. Always and forever a stalemate...”

“Equal power goes nowhere, someone must always be stronger.” Alexandre responded quietly. “We shifters know that better than anything for it is our nature.”

“Indeed...the muggles even have a saying. Survivor of the Fittest.” Albus replied in agreement with those comments. “Essentially, he wants a different wand, preferably a wand of one who has never known defeat. A wand that he knows now exists for he has taken Ollivander prisoner.”

Harry and the others listening, Hermione speaks up as she seems to be thinking. “But the wand is unbeatable. Surely you could just take him out without any problem.”

“I could...but then it is not my fate to fight him.”

“Prophecies change with time and choices Albus. You and most of the Order should know that by now.” Sirius stated coldly as he looks up at one, whom like Harry and Remus had made him realize that

sometimes age can get the better when set in a belief. "Poison or not, you can still do something!"

"Reluctantly I do Sirius." Albus said softly. "But I think Harry agrees with me. Although the essence of the fight may have changed, the fact that Harry sits before me and that Voldemort is still focused on him now since his return?"

"That the snake will go after me no matter what I do or say...it is something that I agree with as well."

"Then will you do what I ask. Kill me...prevent him from getting what he seeks. For I am old and I am dying..."

Shaking his head, Harry turns determined green eyes on him. "No I will not. I am not a killer."

"You must Harry..." Interrupting the protest, Harry moves faster than one could speak. His body much like that of Fawkes, the older wizard is soon forcibly knocked out. The wand taken, the others look at the young man with something akin to shock and fear.

"What the hell...?"

"All legends are open to interpretation..." Harry said quietly as he took the wand in his hands. His fingers caressing it, the young man exerts a warm fire from his hands. The nature of the Phoenix was rising within. Those surrounding him back away as it flares up to shining proportions, the wand responding to the call of its new master as does the other two hollows.

They flare and the shine becomes even brighter as they surround the youth. The stone glowing bright with its magic as the cloak, Harry clutches resonate within.

In mere minutes, the furor has died down and all rests now in piece. The wand, in his hand, Harry hands it to Alexandre with two simple words.

"Break it..."

Screams of denial and protest echoed in the office from Hermione and McGonagall alike. Remus explaining to Ron and Sirius, as he had finally figured out what Harry may have done. The other two men began to smile, in understanding as they watch Alexandre, break the wand in half.

Elsewhere

Power was felt to be dispersing as the wand broke inside Hogwarts itself. As with all great objects of power, that which it contained must go somewhere. Even now the Wizarding world felt the shaking tremors from the released magic.

Voldemort, roared with disbelief as he could feel something that he desires taken away from him, as all life around him seems to grow stronger. The werewolves whom have tried to leave his hiding place, shifted and roared with anger as they broke from their prisons.

Many stunners having had to be shot to keep them from joining Potter and that blasted Wolf of his Lupin.

Vampires found themselves able to see the sunrise again after so long as the giants although retaining their size, gained the intelligence that they had long ago lost in an ancestor's quest for power.

All magical creatures found an increase in their abilities that day when the power exploded. The magic returning to those it had been taken from at the request of the one who wished to return it to the land for which it was born.

A definite change with the destruction of the Elder wand had come.

A powerful weapon is destroyed and magic is returned.

The Ashes burning with rekindled hope as the darkness is denied

Still both grows stronger with it

The Light continues to shine to stave off its nemesis

But still it threatens

Will the Phoenix of Hope continue to rise?

Or will he fall when events

That have yet to come play their role

Chapter 63

Aftermath Interlude

Uncertainty

The destruction of the elder wand, over the next week would cause shifts that would make for the first time in nearly 10 years. Voldemort became concerned enough in his dealings with those that were not human.

Already having werewolves and vampires at his disposal, he found that more than half of the latter had left. With promises of bringing them back the ability to see the sun, through research that he had no intention of doing, he had gained their alliance. But now?

Now they could, it was proven when a child vampire, one that was born was walking around at 9 am the following morning was spotted. Chastised by the elder in fear of being killed by the dreaded rays, it took but a few minutes before the woman could see that she too was standing within.

Never truly his allies, but always regarded as dark is what kept them by his side and against Dumbledore, Potter, and the Light.

That revelation...made many leave.

He still had some of the more powerful ones by his side. Yet their numbers were damaged severely.

The Werewolves, found themselves stronger. Their auras of power having significantly increased, many had found themselves the ability to shift at will. Greyback though having assured him that only Alpha had that ability when they had first met. This too was a rude awakening to him as well.

Especially when some of those who were his seconds in the pride challenged him, as Lupin had done. He had squashed and killed them both but with a price. Whatever had happened had increased power and the instinctual awareness, that he was not as all powerful.

Instincts were leading them to another. Those who were not imprisoned, already Voldemort had reports of them joining with Lupin and this one known only as Alexandre.

Giants had now become like the very wizards. Their intelligence had definitely increased and this had many fearful among his inner circle. Before they were too stupid to understand, now that they could look and you and understand. Over half had withdrawn...

The others were expected to within a month and they were far too strong to try and cast spells of intimidation.

What had made things even worse; others of the magical world were stepping forward.

Veelas and Centaurs to creatures that normally avoid battles were coming forward to aide in what was coming. Through the Delacourts as well as Bill and Charlie Weasley, they as a species were agreeing to aide the light.

The Centaurs albeit with their hatred of anything two legs, had found a home around Hogwarts and the memories of Umbridge still rode strong. With her being a proven death eater...well let's just say they were eager to come out should Hogwarts be attacked.

But that also brought out their enemies whom by chance were simply known as Naga. Much like the centaurs, what made them easily ally themselves with Voldemort was the fact that they were human/snake crossbreeds.

Banshees also came along as well. They despite being ghosts of a sort fed on misery and death much like his precious dementors. All in all creatures that were never involved in the first war, were coming out now for the second.

Dwarves, elves, even the dragons whom had never truly been involved in anything had stepped forward and were getting involved in the war of wizards.

The first time around up until that dratted Potter's birth, Voldemort could actually claim he would win.

Now?

Now he was not so sure.

Chapter 64

Truth

Returning from yet another battle, others in the small order that was not under Dumbledore or the Order of the Phoenix, found themselves steadily growing in strength and power. Already several wolves once loyal to Greyback found themselves in awe of the sheer strength and power that Remus and Alexandre exuded. For it was not dark like their former pack leaders.

But warm...

Instinctively they knew that these men would treat them better than Fenrir or Voldemort did. They even cried when the Phoenix that was and wasn't sang a song of peace and contentment. Something many of the wolves had wanted. And found hard to keep.

So their surprise when it was revealed to be the young man, whom was Voldemort's nemesis. They found themselves on the side of the light with honest to goodness warmth as the sheer adoration he held for their pack leaders extended to themselves as well. Indeed and when like Lupin several of them had been wizards but never taught.

It was Harry's idea that Fleur as well as Remus teach them some simple ordinary spells. Ones such as Protego and Expillarmus to help them in battles against the Dark wizards who still think they are higher than the rest of them. And it has helped. Many of them now had at least a rudimentary ability to throw off the simplest of spells. And with Fleur's help they hoped to throw off more.

More allies were coming to see Harry among them were a race of beings that although fair and ethereal. Had come for one purpose alone...

Ginny was due within a month now to give birth to Harry and Gabrielle's son James. With the Veela's death at the hands of the Death Eaters, it had inflamed the nation as well as made them curious. The fact that the child was a boy was rare for the Veela as the last one that had been born was near 35 years ago.

They felt that as a whole that he would best serve as not only their representative to the light, but as someone whom as the only male veela in existence. Could give the soon to be very human and father a heads up on what to escape. And to tell him the news that until James let him know it was all right...

Harry could not put Ginny Weasley in Azkaban as much as he desired to out of vengeance. Deep in his heart he knew it was wrong. But he could not help how he felt. His wife...his beautiful Gabrielle was gone. He would never hear her kind understanding, or hear her shouting words in French at him when she was irritated. Or hear her soft voice calm him down when in a fit of temper.

To be honest that is why he finds himself drifting towards Ginny since he found out she was pregnant now with his and Gabrielle's baby. Within her lies the only link left he has to the gentle and elegant Veela girl whom had wormed her way into his heart with simple patience.

He just wished it wasn't the red headed girl who lived. She may have been his first love. But that was all she was. His first...Gabrielle had been his last.

But by the sounds of what the man had told him, and what Fleur had been willing to share. Ginny would be part of his life whether or not he liked it. James had referred to her as his mommy. And remembering his own need for Lily's presence often, when he was a child...he would not deprive his own son of her presence.

To this he now finds himself standing in front of the door. Ron beside him, he had discussed things over with his friend concerning what he plans to do with Ginny. Relieved in the fact that Harry will keep where she was found a secret, he was still not pleased that she would be staying with Harry without a benefit of marriage of some kind.

He could understand though that loyalty to his dead wife. Fleur in one of his rages long ago, against Harry's cool treatment of his baby sister. Had shown him pictures of the two together in France...

And what he had seen had made Ron see things from Harry's side. The loving adoration for the blonde woman in Harry's arms was clear as it was returned. Something he himself has seen in pictures of when he and Hermione were still together. He had truly loved Gabrielle Delacourt.

It was one of the reasons; he had been making an effort to make Hermione understand things. And now...ever since that meeting she had been patient, and slowly but surely she was coming back into the fold.

She still tried to act bossy, when she had accompanied him to the Hollow, but there was a sincere effort on her part to keep it light. And to not allow her voice to have that know it all quality again...

Twice in her efforts to become friends again with Harry she had found herself rebuked soundly to the point that it had hurt her deeply. But unlike before where she would have run off or even have tried to make him see it her way. She stayed put and endured patiently.

And she had been rewarded.

He had almost taken it back though when she harped on him about his cold treatment of Ron's sister. It was to the point that he had almost hexed her right then and there, but yet as always her words sank through and he could see her point. So here he was, going to allow the one woman who could make or break his life. Some minute measure of Freedom.

All ready he had agreed to allow her to move into a suite of rooms for which, the wolves had helped her move into, as a lot she could no longer do because of her state. Pushing the door open, he enters the room to find her lying down upon the bed. Her things all around her, cradling the belly protectively...

"Why?"

"Harry?"

“Why did you do it Ginny?” He replied. “Why did you become one of them?”

Seeing his eyes, like chipped jade. Ginny longed for a time when once they looked at her with love. But yet now...now as she studies his features, she knows she can never have that look again. Her thoughts over time with him had made her see Harry as he was once more.

This time, she could see the hard changes that they themselves with their betrayal forced him to endure. Something positive could be seen in his eyes in reference to Remus, Ron, Tonks, or any of the others within. You could even see pure love in his features when the Wolf mother Isabelle came through as she had chosen to stay.

But for her there was nothing, unless Harry gazed at her stomach. Then she could feel the magic growing between his son and him as the baby would often kick happily at the sense of his father being near.

“To be honest Harry...Vengeance.” She responded softly. Struggling to sit up in a comfortable position, Harry remains where he is as Ron rushes to help her. A soft and gentle smile at the sight of her brother whom despite all that she has done still loves her.

“What the hell why Vengeance?”

Looking at her brother, Ron realizes the reasons why. Nodding his head in understanding, this time the elder of the Weaselys in the room speaks up. “You did not see her, when news that we were all wrong hit the Order Harry. She was a wreck...” He said quietly. “There were times where Mum had to make her eat the following year...”

Listening, Harry just looks over at her with something akin to pity, but the anger and the indifference is still there.

“So you joined to get close and to get back at him for me?”

“Yes...and it was working. I was close to the inner circle and on top of that...”

“What...?”

“I was the one doing most of the spying alongside Professor Snape and Draco.” She worded softly. “I used the fact that one of the Death Eaters...the one who essentially replace Bella LeStrange...well after the one you did to her. I used his infatuation with me, to gain some of the latter information to give to the order.”

“I see. That still doesn’t really explain why. How many people did you kill? How many lives were ruined because of you?”

“Not very many...”

Surprised by her honest answer, as he expected numbers as with Snape would answer. He and Ron both listen at that which Draco and Snape had done in his absence with her aide. Risking their lives to not only act as spies, but to save as many innocent people as they could...

In fact, Ginny gave them the names of several muggleborn and their families, which she herself had gotten out before an attack. Tonks who was listening outside the door immediately set out about checking to see if it was true. Still as Sirius now entered the room alongside others that she knew as a child and teenager, Ginny found herself wanting to get quiet.

The disappointment and shame in their faces was too much for her to handle. She may have gotten stronger to put up with Dean and Voldemort’s constant put downs or blatant out right harassment.

But it was different from people you knew. People whom you still love although they may not love you back.

“Could you please go?”

Startled by her quiet voice, Harry remains where he is. Her brown eyes turning away from him and the others, he growls out in anger.

“You expect to be redeemed? To be forgiven for trying to save a few people!”

“NO! I expect you to understand!” She shot back. The hormones being in overdrive, she glares angrily at him. James letting his presence be known now lets out with a tremendous kick on her belly. Causing Ginny to buckle a bit in pain...

Hermione being the only woman there at the time along with a shifter by the name of Janey rushes forward. Helping her out, Hermione and the werewolf both sends glares to Harry at having caused this reaction. Fleur had been smart, had explained months before to the older werewolf about the metabolism that will be out of whack should Ginny's emotions become too heavy for the baby to handle.

Being a mother herself, between Fleur and Madame Pomphrey's instructions in between check ups Janey had insured that the baby as well as the mother would be fine. Now with this happening, the lady was on the verge of shifting to snap some sense into her charges.

For when Isabelle was not there to scold, Janey by consensus would take her place. She was in a sense the Aunt of the Pride.

“Go...you will get nothing else today.”

That voice in the shifter's was one of finality. Reluctant, they had left, Harry with a gaze of pure anger in his features. Stalks out last...

About 20 minutes later, the sound of a battle on the training grounds emerges. Hermione listening shakes her head in pain as does Janey, whom is checking on Ginny in silence. The two women saying nothing in response as they work to not only calm the red head, but also the living being inside her.

Chapter 65

Belief

It has only been two days since the incident with Harry confronting her in her room, and Ginny was still upset about it. Harry has yet to come and see her again as he has done daily up until that point.

"I...I wish things had gone differently."

"Don't us all."

Hearing the familiar voice behind her, Ginny manages to turn around to find Hermione standing there with a kind smile on her features. Approaching the bed, the brown haired woman sits upon it beside her, "How's little Jamie."

The baby kicking as he hears the sound of his name, he lets his presence be known with a gentle one this time. Ginny giggling at the activity he gives within her belly, she becomes sorrowful only moments later. "Harry hate's me doesn't he?"

"No. Harry doesn't really have the capacity to hate. If he really did, I don't think he would have come back to help us." She responded softly. "Harry cares to much for us despite the past."

"Then maybe it's just me, or something." The youngest of the Weasely brood replied softly. "He treats me like I don't exist..."

Giving a small sigh, Hermione holds one of her dearest female friend's close. "You know that is not true. That fight the other day, should have told you that."

"That was even worse Hermione! He refuses to listen. I know he is not the same Harry I know that! But why won't he see I am not the same Ginny."

"Can you honestly blame him?" The older of the two said softly. "He lost his wife, his parents...he even almost lost Sirius and his freedom to the foolish of our own making." She whispered sadly. "The fact that

Ron saw this before me had made me hate him and love him at the same time.”

Hearing her friend’s admittance, Ginny looks up at Hermione incredulously. “You have always loved Ron though.”

“I know and I do...but I think I was not ready to change. I had always been the one who was right. Always been the one who was logical and observant.”

“And he surpassed you.”

“I wouldn’t say that.” Hermione giggled softly. “He is still Ron, but now there is another side to him. One that makes him better almost...he is willing to listen now more than ever. It and the meeting made me realized things have changed. And that despite my own belief...I had not...”

“Hermione?”

Reluctant to speak Hermione does so with calmness that belies the truth of her words. “I don’t know how to explain this Ginny; I think you are in the same boat I was in.”

“I don’t understand.”

“What we believe, is never what actually is.” Hermione replied softly. “I was so determined to be the best, the brightest witch that as I grew I became that, but...where it counted. I was still the same Hermione. The same know it all, that Ron accused me of being our first year. The same girl who always had to be right, always had to correct everyone else...”

Ginny paled now as she sees where she sees Hermione is going. Hesitant to speak, she finds she can not even think of the proper words to continue.

“Ginny, you may know he has changed, and have realized that countless times. But as I thought about the fight and wishing that like you he would understand, Janey asked me something.”

Has she always been in love with him?

Startled by those words, the red head tries to answer that she did not, but finds the words do not come. Her best friend as a girl shaking her head, smiles sadly as she gets up. "Ginny...I now see that Janey is right." She whispered. "Maybe if we had not done what we did years ago in falling for what Voldemort created, something may have happened between you both. But it is not meant to be. He does not love you."

"But...the baby...I'm his mother now."

"I know...we all do Ginny. Fleur tells us it would happen, because he is bonded to your spirit and core." Hermione responded softly. "But unlike the Wizarding world, you must remember that Harry has also lived in the Muggle. And Parents regardless of the children do not always love each other or even live together in it."

"No...He wouldn't do that. He would not take James away from me."

"He would not." Hermione replied quietly. "He remembers too much of needing his own mother as a little boy. Although you are not Gabrielle...although...it pains him to say it, and I can understand why it troubles him. But although you are not her, to James, you are his mother. He will not put you in Azkaban, and he will not bar you from his son's life once he is born Ginny. But do not expect him to give you his heart. It died, when she did..."

Denial in her eyes, Hermione stands to head out the door. A sad and almost pitying smile on her features as she looks back at her, "He knows you are a good person. He went to those people himself these last couple days and verified your words. But it still matters not...there is one person he will blame you for. Even if you did not actively do it, Gabrielle Delacourt-Potter is gone."

"So I should put up with how he treats me..." She said resignedly. "Like I am not even there..."

“No...I am not saying that. Next time he comes...tell him about James and anything he might say or do. Do not wait for Fleur to tell him. At least with James, you will be in his life and maybe with time. You can be his friend again, but do not try to win his heart...the ghost of her death and where you were at the time of it will forever come between you.”

“And then...what should I do if everything has changed. I still care for him so much”

“I don't know but I can tell you this...he might understand you.”

-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-

People...I was in a great mood when I wrote this tonight, because I had good things to come and that it would also settle some issues that I have constantly had hate mail or downright rude flammers about.

Checking my email just this last hour has about near me turned me off ever continuing on this site again. But as one said earlier and I agree with her. I do this for my own enjoyment, and my way of trying to express myself and my ideas. So I will continue but do read what I about to say

Newsflash once more. I AM WRITING THIS NOT YOU. If you want to write a different version your way. Go right ahead I do not bloody care. But you have to check it with the two previous authors mentioned in the note in chapter 1 that a lot of you are apparently forgetting to read or even remember now. So do me a favor, you don't like it DON'T read it

Chapter 66

Heart

Isabelle was quiet as she returned from checking on the Mainland tribes. Looking for those that she loves and cares for; already she can feel the angry tension in the air. A single silver eyebrow raising up, the werewolf mother looks for some answers. This was not how she envisioned her Harry's life to be.

A soft smile on her features, she lets her senses soar and detects the scents of those whom can help her understand. Mostly a fellow wolf and gentle leader of many much like herself...

Following the trail, she comes upon Remus and his chosen mate Tonks looking thoughtful.

"Aahh there you are."

Startled by her voice, a light shines in their features. Usually frowned upon in the British Wizarding world, Alexandre, Isabelle and the other wolves pretty much said, and your point is? Their relationship was accepted and Isabelle approved of the young human woman.

She realized that she helped make Remus believe in himself much like she did for her late husband and now, like she does for her children for whom Harry and Remus had become to her.

"I'm glad you are back Isabelle." Remus replied quietly, as Tonks slides off his lap. Being marked continuously by simple nuzzles and cuddles. Tonks was now a human who could survive among shifted wolves. It was an animal's nature, to want to touch and play, Alexandre had explained long ago.

For it was their way to find those in their family. By doing so, it made those whom the wolf considers safe and they would never harm.

It would explain so much as to why Harry and Sirius could be around Remus in Animagus form when they shifted. Although their scents were their own, if a wolf really scented them as they should?

You would detect the scent of pack in their bodies. Remus in his longtime association with both had marked them over the years. And now with Tonks being added, she was fast becoming pack to the wolves as well.

Certainly a mixed pride, but it was one of love. Tilting her head now to look at Remus, she knows he understands as he points to the reason behind the tension.

Smiling and leaning forward to nuzzle them both, a warm smile on her features emerges more on her features as she goes off to find her youngest child.

Going in the direction pointed out to her for near twenty minutes, she finds the one that she seeks pacing as he looked at recent plans for another event. As much as Harry simply wanted to storm and be done with it all, with the new allies appearing on both sides. Things had to be utilized even more carefully.

“What is wrong wolfling?”

Whirling around to see her, Harry looks rather sheepish as he looks into her kind eyes. “It’s been a long week Isabelle.”

“Harry how many times do I have to tell you, it’s all right for you to call me Mom.” The older woman stated with a gentle smile.

A small sigh escaping his lips, he turns to her with a soft and yet somewhat depressed smile. “I want to...but I don’t know if I should.”

Confusion for a moment, the older woman smiles softly in understanding. “Is this something to do with the fact you have given young Ginny some measure of freedom?” She asks quietly. “Or is this something more?”

“A little bit of both.” He regretfully replied.

Silence between them both, Harry knows that the wolf mother will not speak until he is ready. Taking a deep breath, as she takes a sit, he

sits down beside her to rest his head in her lap. Savoring the motherly touch through his hair, he drinks in the tenderness and the open ear that she offers.

"Some things were said and as much as I didn't want anything to be said or to even happen."

"It made you think."

"Yes...the way I had things originally, I wanted Ginny gone the moment James was born. Hermione...didn't like that at all. She pointed out some things..."

"Like what?"

"How would James feel if you deprived him of a mother, like Voldemort had deprived you Harry? Ginny is all he has, and right now anyone can see she has grown to love him as her own."

"Aaah to the point."

"Exactly." He whispered. "I almost hexed her right there for her audacity. But what she said. She was right... James would hate me, like I hate him. I don't want to deprive my son of something of a family."

Softly brushing fingers through his hair, she listens to his words with a smile. "And you won't wolfing of mine. James will grow up loved; he will have many whom adore him with the pride and the wizards whom you trust."

"But is that not betraying Gabrielle? She was his real mother!" He exclaimed as he clutched on to her tighter.

"Would not the same be for me or Mrs. Weasley from before Harry? Is that not betraying the memory of your mother?" She said softly. "Or would not Gabrielle and your dear mother Lily, not want a woman to love them as they would?"

Moving deeper somewhat within her lap, to just drink in her warmth, Harry remains silent as he takes in her words and eventually falls into a restful sleep. That moment, sound and out like a light, she looks up and smiles as Alexandre approaches. The dark haired bends down as Isabelle leans forward for a kiss. Sirius not too far behind him, he does the same causing the woman to let out a small smile.

Both were truly a lot alike.

"I see why you both asked me to return early."

"Yes...despite things having been quiet. His mood has been one of anger. None of us were willing to approach something like this." Alexandre said softly.

"Instead we all sort of became punching bags for his anger. But he still held a lot in. The way I saw him with you in the past, I knew that maybe he would listen to you." Sirius replied. "Not even me turning Alexandre here pink did anything to bring him out. Made the others laugh though." The wizard replied as he ducked a playful swipe from Alexandre.

Although the werewolf was not James, he was eventually replacing the spot his longtime friend once held before his death. A brother in spirit...

In fact there were even times, when Sirius could sense James beside him as well Lily, smiling in approval at the company of the Wolves whom had given himself, Harry and Remus a sense of belonging.

Everyone needs that, and years ago together and at Hogwarts they had it, but after that fateful night. They seemed lost and without something to bind them and bring them together as they once were.

Harry helped to a degree, but he was not old enough to understand a lot of what they grew up with. Even then, he could not understand years of pain or loss as someone their own age would have. Alexandre filled that role for them as James did years before.

The Marauders in their own way had come back from the brink of destruction, and gained people who were equal and if not better than the ones lost.

A team once more, one that could face the world and find some way to conquer it/

Ashes of despair are brushed away

A Wolf replacing Stag in a bond of three

They strengthen the Phoenix of Hope with their support

Unconditional support and willingness to aide

The flame grows brighter and shines with renewed strength and thought

So that it becomes a beacon in the oppressing dark.

Flames burn small and bright

But even the littlest shine can be seen

When there is nothing but darkness around

Chapter 67

Sickness

As those of the light thought and savored the first taste of calm for several days, among those of the dark. Tensions only grew...

Draco as well as some of more of the younger death eaters were getting crucioed now more the ever. Cormac as Voldemort's new 'pet' still took the brunt of it. But since Potter came back and has been forcing stalemates?

Well...a body can only stay conscious for so long.

And it has only steadily gotten worse; with a fair amount of the allies that Voldemort had counted on leaving to become one again with the light. The Wolves were virtually gone as despite Greyback still being an alpha, they had felt calls stronger then the insane wolf's and had left to join as their instinct commanded.

That had been a blow to Greyback, whom despite being emotionally driven as he was. Logic that had come to him as instincts became stronger, were telling him to go and submit to the others.

But he refused, Werewolf or not, he would submit to NO ONE!

Even Voldemort was growing wary of him, as others left. Some of the vampires had stayed, but what hurt was the loss of the giants. He had counted on them that once he gained enough power to bring down the ancient wards of Hogwarts, to bring the castle to the ground.

Somehow and he knows Potter is at fault for this, they had become smarter. Their minds had taken on an intelligent look, and they were no longer as stupid as he has always taken them for. When he had insulted the half giant headmistress of Beauxbatons, he had no idea that the leader of the giants beside him was her father.

And although he still loved to destroy things, he loved his daughter more and he understood that derogatory tone concerning Madame Maxine.

He was not a happy giant and in his wake as he left. The giants had left a path of intense destruction on purpose. He had his minions around the clock, still fixing his home.

But he was meaning to remodel to a degree anyhow. He was enjoying torturing his prisoners as they hastily worked. Wizard and Muggle alike were in chains of his creation. Chains that amplified Pain and anger...

Made the screams so much more exquisite to his ears, as he walked by them hard at work, and dying to please him to spare themselves the pain of his wrath. It mattered not though, they were weak and not worth his time. Casting a crucio at a woman, just to hear her scream, he watched with delight as she fell from her high perch. Her body connecting to the ground with a loud thud, he already could tell she was dead.

It was then that he summoned his new friend with hissing sounds of pleasure. Unlike Nagini, who was also his Horcrux at the time. This snake although equally as deadly when it came to the coils wrapped a body, it was also highly poisonous. Just one drop of its venom was like acid on anything organic.

“Sashima...supper is ready.”

The snake hissing with pleasure as she hears the words of her master, Death Eater and prisoner alike got out of the way, afraid that the snake will turn on them as well. The Dark Lord simply smiles and continues on in taking a nice and quiet stroll.

Watching as the vile snake man for lack of any better term goes off and further away. Snape finds himself bring Draco Malfoy several potions to heal the injured and to share with the others around him. Snape and Malfoy since, Harry's reappearance has steadily been gaining more support among those under him.

Among them surprisingly was Pansy Parkinson, the now young woman had thought being with the Dark Lord was all that she could live for. But what she had seen being done over the years since his

coming forth and the 'death' of Harry Potter. Made her sick...

She may not like mudbloods or blood traitors all that much, but that careless tossing away of life? And in such a way, as to hand those over to Bellatrix and then Dean to play with...it made her sick to her stomach. She had seen the results of one of their experiments far too many times.

And each time, it was steadily getting worse.

Her last straw had only been two months ago, when Dean was playing with a young boy in a potion he had made. One that he discovered in a book...

Pansy refused to talk about it with himself and Draco, but it made her tremble and not able to eat for days as she was the one made to clean it up. All she could tell Draco, was the parts were still moving...they were still moving!

Just the images of what she could be referring to, had made both men violently ill at the thoughts and pictures in their minds.

Since then, more of the death eaters had been steadily changing their minds. Some fleeing for their lives, not many had escaped the wrath of the Dark Lord. You see among the few creatures there, the vampires with a majority of the wolves gone had been given free reign over those that try to leave.

Many died...

And as Harry won or caused the Dark lord's plans to stall, more and more of those still loyal felt themselves being punished for his doings. The pets that they had been bringing them over the years no longer worked. Even now Cormac McClaggen was out cold from the intense crucio he had been put under for a few minutes. Most would not be surprised if the man was now insane like the Longbottoms from years before.

“What are we going to do Draco? He’s getting worse with every day that passes?” Pansy asked quietly as the blonde handed her some potions to keep her healthy and steadily passed some to the prisoners without the others looking. Those who had been caught knew and stopped the new ones who had come in pleading among the muggles and wizards alike.

These men and women had managed to not bend despite the pain and torture that they had been enduring and appreciated all that these men tried to do to alleviate some of the pain.

“We do what we can and pray that Potter finds a way to stop him.” The blonde said quietly.

“And what if he doesn’t? We can’t go like this forever, I mean damnit it Draco! He only got by through the skin of his teeth when were at Hogwarts and that was with the help of the Weasel and the Mudblood!”

“I know Pansy!” Draco hissed. “Say it out louder; I don’t think the Dark Lord heard you!”

Wincing a bit at the reminder of their position, Pansy whispers softly. “Draco, though he only got by with the help of them. How can we expect him to get through this now?”

“We don’t.” Draco said quietly. “We don’t expect him to...”

“Draco?”

“Pansy if we expect him to do something, it puts pressure on him to succeed. Pressure in this day and age that you and both know he does not need. It is what led to his downfall before at the hands of the Dark Lord. Do you really want to risk it happening again?”

The young woman was startled as for the first time Draco reminded her of the past. The happiness they had both felt at what happened to Potter was wonderful in their eyes in the beginning. But as time told, the world that they did knew did not change.

It only got worse...

"No I don't want it happening again. Back then...at least we had peace...we were able to have fun."

"But now?"

"Now it's horrible..." She whispered. "No one smiles...no one."

Chapter 68

Dying truth 1

Voldemort was troubled. Dean Thomas, one of his brightest was beginning to get out of control. Bellatrix, was among the very few whom could control him somewhat when she was sentient. In the young man's experimentation to somehow bring her out of the induced nightmare, he has tested his ideas on many a one that he has driven insane.

With messy results...

Yes they were muggles, but at the rate the former Gryffindor was going through them? Well that was troubling to say the least. Bellatrix, even at her worst, would never do this much damage to a body, but yet Dean reveled in it.

But at the moment it was worse.

Now days did not go by where, the young man did not emerge immaculate. But covered in blood and other things...things that sometimes still moved...

Even now, he could hear the screams from the directions of the testing chambers that Dean commandeered for himself in the slowly emerging palace that was once the Riddle Manor. Screams that would last well into the night, if he did not place silencing wards upon the doors himself during that period of slumber.

Although he was infinitely more powerful, then his chief torturer at the moment, what he did not have in power. Dean Thomas made up for in deviousness and that is what is making Voldemort worry.

He was not a stupid wizard; he was one who knew that a well placed trap or spell. Can catch someone off guard far better, when one doesn't expect it...

And Dean as he was mentally was very capable of making one when a wizard least expects it...

Hogwarts

Albus, despite feeling ill from the poisonous effects of the one Horcux, he had managed to destroy looked out at the others in the meeting he had arranged. Many of them have yet to know he was dying. Only his closest advisors like Minerva, Hermione and Ron know of his illness.

Snape has suspicions those few times he could get away, but because of the demand the Dark Lord has on him, it has become increasingly difficult to leave on some excuse. Still it was time to tell the others.

Hearing thoughts and worries steadily increasing, the older man was stunned as Harry emerged alongside the three whom are now his own closest advisors when it came to dealings. Sirius, Remus, and the Wolf leader Alexander...

"Albus, why are we here?" Asked one of the newer members, a young woman named Elizabeth Tyler. She had come from the American ministry to aide the British resistance against Voldemort. It seemed that even now the Americans agreed that at least half the Ministry there were pretty much on the payrolls of many of Voldemort's supporters with out realizing it.

Or realizing it and not giving a damn.

Because regardless of being a wizard...there is one thing more powerful then magic and that's money in any way shape or form.

"I have an announcement I must make." The elderly wizard said quietly. "It is one I have hoped to avoid, but I can no longer avoid it."

The pain and agony in his voice that he had so carefully hidden before was clearly evident now. Even more to the fact, as he sat down, the condition of his hand was visible. It was beyond simply black as if in a bruise. His hand seemed to actually be almost decaying on his very body.

And pulling up his sleeve, the people in the room just looked in horror as it spread.

“No...”

Giving a small sigh, he looks to Harry whom studies it with a sickened look to his face. “Due to something that right now, I have only shared with those who have the ability to possibly destroy the others. I am dying...”

“Albus!”

“No! You can’t!”

“We need you!”

“How can we face the Dark Lord without to lead us if Harry Potter won’t!”

Hearing the words band desperation being screamed out to the elderly man, Alexander gets a look on his face as does the others. The disgust was clearly evident as he screamed...

“ENOUGH!”

Startled by the scream the four men had all eyes on them. Alexander radiating a fury unlike any have seen before. Even those that had managed to flee the Dark Lord, trembled as the anger seemed to seep from every pore in his body. His eyes a radiant golden yellow like that of a wolf, he moved to the center in front of everyone and growled out loudly.

“You weak fools...” Alexander growled out as he overlooked the various witches and wizards in the room. “Are you that bloody weak as to put all that you are on a solitary person? I didn’t necessarily believe at first that all of you were that weak minded, but now hearing your cries for a leader god... I am surprised the Wolfing came back to help save your sorry hides, even with what you did to him. Because you are quite frankly doing it again...”

“Who the hell are you?!”

“What right do you have!”

“SILENCE!” Alexander shouted out. The power flowing from his words, allows the Wolf to speak out more as it sounds almost primal. Albus for some reason smiles and says nothing as all this goes on. Minerva and the other teachers pleading with him to stop this, he shakes his head.

“He is right.” Albus said softly. His voice is concise and clear despite the pain in it. “Look back at before, before the trial. All of you look back and then see what you are doing now. You are placing all your hopes in me, when I do not need it.”

Stepping forward now, Harry looks almost thoughtful now as he speaks. Looking at Alexander who offers him a smile, the young man talks...

“There is a muggle movie; I have recently had the honor to watch on television the other day. It is one where the words one character stated seemed to resonate with me. I can’t save the entire world. It’s too much pressure, too big a chance to fail...but I can save two of them and succeed.”

The people look around at one another in confusion as Harry speaks. But as his and Albus’s words start to sink in, some of them realize what they state and shame starts to appear now in their eyes. Among them the Creevys...the two brothers whom before had been very much as Harry and the others described before. They silence the others who protest with simple gazes as they nod their heads and speak. Coming from those whom had been the strongest in their hopes and dreams...

What they said next shocked many...

“Think about it...we put all the pressure on him before to save us all and what happened... we buckled and lost Harry. We lost him when we allowed ourselves to be swayed so easily by a simple plot that turned us into a weapon that made the world we have now. Now look

all of you put all your hopes your pressure on Dumbledore to fix everything...wanting him to desire to save all of us when Harry could not or would not do it and Albus is dying. Dying from the pressure we put on him.”

Somehow as he sat back down, the words now had the effect of opening the eyes of many, all at once. Even Minerva and the others whom had been after Albus to get Harry to join the Order, found themselves shamefaced even worse, then when the idea that the prophecy had already been fulfilled was proven to be plausible...

“What do we now?”

“You stand up for yourselves.” Alexander growled out. “Don’t expect help to get there right away. Use your wand fight back buy time for those who can help to arrive but until they come don’t just stay there...do what you can to save those you love. You may not be able to save everyone, but you can save those who count...”

Chapter 69

Aftermath

Interlude

In the days that would come to follow, since that meeting and confrontation of sorts at Hogwarts. The battle between the light and the dark side changed noticeably to those who would look.

Although there were still those great battles, the dark would be surprised as unlike before. Where there victims would just sit there and plead for their lives, this time the light fought back!

On August 14, help and the use of the Unforgivables was registered all over the United Kingdom, causing the thinly spread out Ministry to be spread even further save for around their headquarters in Diagon Alley.

This would be considered the day, that the Wizarding World would realize that they can make a difference if they stand up and fight.

At the home of a former classmate and friend, Cho Chang would fight back. Aiding a muggleborn friend, named Jessica Davidson whom she had been visiting at the time, it was between the two of them that they stalled the Death Eaters from destroying the house, to enable Jessica's brother and father to get their mother out in the firefight. The two girl fleeing with them were creating as much of an obstacle as they could.

Ducking curse after curse, Jessica would not make it as she was killed in the attempts to escape. Having been the stronger of the two girls, magic wise, Jessica had chosen to be the last out along with Cho.

None of the other three able to do magic, they had insisted despite the protests from the two men that they go last to buy them time.

But somehow as the explosions kept getting closer and closer as the house was literally being torn apart now. The young woman had

deftly knocked her friend out and lifted her to her father, who was hurt from taking some debris from the windows being blown out in the living room at the beginning of the attack.

"Daddy...go." Jessica whispered softly as the older man pulled Cho to safety.

"No baby girl..."

"Please Daddy...go. They are almost here...RUN!"

Slamming the window closed with a spell, the young woman waited for those few moments, for the Death Eaters to come out. Her father constantly banging for her to flee, he noticed as she was pointing her wand to the gas tank a soft smile crossing her features.

"If I die...I am taking all of you with me!"

A red flame shooting out of her wand seconds later, the man all but vanished in time to Cho summoning him as she came to when the house exploded. The spell had caused the propane tank for Barbecues to explode...

Killing everyone inside...

Among them were the Crabbes, both father and son leading the attack as it was simple hit and destroy run. They had counted on the fact that the mere sight would cause people to freeze up as it had in the past, for they could strike fear with their size and weight.

It was unexpected that as the fire reached them in mere seconds, that their victims would fight back.

They were not the first though among the inner circle to die that day.

Although the daughter was tired and fed up, her father was not. Pansy Parkinson lost her father to an auror, who had arrived in the nick of time to help a wizard save three of his children from death.

Ironically, the oldest boy whom even if he was only 15 years old, was responsible as well for taking out three other death eaters along with his sibling whom had recently turned 11. It seems that their father had taken the words that Alexandre had spoken to heart.

Mr. Kingsley had decided to teach his children defense that had been sorely lacking, because of incompetent teachers at Hogwarts. He himself knowing of the famed curse on the position had done that as the words spoken by those at the meeting rang true.

Don't just wait around and hope the wards will hold. Get out and run while you can...

And if you can't?

BLAST your way out and make damn sure that they die or are unable to attack, for if you could save those you love. Then it is all worth it.

Voldemort was not pleased. Normally the populace would put up a mock fight; wizard and muggle alight and be done quickly. In fact he had ordered it done so as he needed new slaves to work on remodeling his home. But this time when they returned?

Not many came back with his much wanted workers. In fact some came back with none at all.

Voldemort was not happy. Especially when he heard the excuses that were given, he had screamed in rage. Three more minions had died alongside the 10 others whom had been caught in the explosion. 6 others would not be ready to fight him now as well, due to injuries that he inflicted.

He was not happy.

The light was developing a backbone. It was then a wicked smile crossed his lips. Perhaps it was time to unleash, one to put them back in their places again. Bellatrix may be gone...

But her apprentice was most assuredly not.

-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-

Short yes, but someone once again told me they were willing to help beta. And as you can see no changes and I had waited for quite some time...

This is just a small chapter to tide you over to the next one, which should be coming next week. Having some difficulty with it coming to my satisfaction after all

Chapter 70

Godric's Hollow

It had not been long since that meeting, and Harry and the light had found themselves, for the first time, able to say that they were proud of the Wizarding world. People were actually starting to fight back!

Rather than whine, complain, or insist someone come save them, there were those who, despite not being aurors or order members, fought back, and were not weak creatures that did not resist what fate would have given them. Even now the elves had come to speak with Alexandre about what they could help.

Most of them were healers, so he and Sirius were directing them to Hogwartsto speak with Madame Pomphrey. Despite St. Mungo's having most of what they needed, in terms of medicine and beds, it was still a place that was not secure or safe for those of the light. It was just too easily broken into.

Due to this increase of backbone in the people, the small group of light wizards hiding out were relaxing their guard as plans and strategies were suggested to try and keep things rolling even farther in favor of the light.

But none of them...no one expected what would happen next...

At the sound of the Floo activating, all in hearing range came on guard. No one was expected to arrive today. Immediately, two of the wolves rushed upstairs to guard Ginny, for she was still weak, though she was able to move better. She was in the final stages of the pregnancy, and she was considered vitally important.

That little baby within her was hope for them all.

Ron stepped out of the Floo, looking around for Harry and the others frantically. Spying his friend, Ron bounds to him faster then he can blink.

“Ron?”

“Harry, we need you...” The red headed man said desperately. “Voldemort..., he’s letting him run loose...” The youngest of the Weasley men whispered out shuddering. He looked sick and green from whatever images 'he' conjured up in his mind.

“Who?”

“Dean...” The youth replied quickly. “I don’t have time to explain Harry, but you have to come. Fawkes is doing what he can, but so many... if you have a potions master or someone who can help, send them, please. We need help...”

The pain in his eyes evident as was the sickly tint to his skin. Harry nods his head and turns to Remus, Sirius, and Alexandre, with whom he had been chatting before Ron's arrival.

“Get Fleur... Remus til she comes...”

“I will gather what we have, Harry.” The shifter replied. Alexandre and Sirius were already moving, on their way to Albania, to bring back Fleur. The Veela woman was there with Bill Weasley to try and find clues about anything Voldemort may have hidden there before his return to the UK, so long ago.

The two men then left themselves through the Floo after Ron. Both got sick as they arrived at Hogwarts. The stench of blood permeated the air, saturating everything, and the sheer foulness of it made both want to retch as they stepped from the fireplace. Although everything they saw was clean as they walked into Hogwarts, their instincts warned them about what they would shortly see.

Suppressing their instincts, they could hear people pleading for help. However, what they saw when they entered made each man turn white.

In the Wizarding World, healing cuts and bruises is as simple as drinking a potion or muttering a few spells.

But from what the men saw in the room, it seemed as though magic was against them all. The Wizarding world was reduced to muggle means against this onslaught. With each movement of a patient, new gashes erupted over skin. Blood was pouring out faster than the healers could keep up with, and their spells were useless against whatever was occurring. Fawkes flew overhead, doing all that he could with his tears. This stemmed the tide of blood, but Fawkes was but one phoenix.

Hermione came rushing up to them, snagging Remus as she ran, while Ron turned to Harry to explain.

"We don't know what started this, but there was apparently a fight outside the Lowestoft area, where there was a concert. I don't know what for sure was going on, but Hermione has figured out that they used the fight to cover the real problem."

"Which was?"

"The water, Harry, they did something to the water! Our magical cores fight it seems, in wizardfolk as well as squibs. But the muggles..."

Shivering, Ron, just went over to a body. The Order having only brought one Muggle, Harry paled as he could not even tell whether or not the body was human. It was curled into a fetal position, and it seemed as if the skin, although still attached, was flayed off. Even now it was oozing blood...

Not saying another word, Harry transformed. His phoenix emerging from where he once stood, he flies to Fawkes, who makes a sound of gratefulness, obviously exhausted. Before either of them could begin, another phoenix comes in. Emitting a soft song from its gentle throat, this new arrival sings.

As the peaceful melody fills the air, the screams and tortured howls die down. Fawkes and Harry join in the soft trill as they to cry, buying

the time needed by the healers. The pain is eased and time is bought for the Healers to do their job, and for Fawkes to regain strength. Time has been given, it is up to others not to waste it...

Seconds later, Fleur has arrived and, having been informed about the situation, is rushing down with Bill and Ron to the potion's rooms. None of them noticing other footsteps that followed as Sirius and Alexandre came along with the shifters.

All the while, down in the potion's room, Hermione and Remus work as fast as they possibly can to help and heal...

A frazzled Hermione is working alongside Remus, having taken blood from the dead body and that of a wizard who had been willing to give. The two work quickly to try and find an antie that worked.

"Where can I and the others help?" Fleur stated in a serious tone. Bill stood beside her as did Ron. What surprised the two already weary workers was the four others that came behind. Tall and beautiful and with hair ranging from white to darkest gold. Veela...

Each one was wearing a pendant much like the one Harry has taken to recently, their aura had been dampened down enough to keep the men from being captivated by their charms. Once directed and asked to help isolate properties of the water, the ethereal women set to work.

The inherent magic of the veela began to permeate the room as they started to glow with a radiant light. Being what they were, creatures of nature, it was lucky that they had not started off where Hermione and the others worked. Their bodies gave off a brilliant light that poked and prodded at the liquid in the bowls. They cringed as the water seemed to lash out, lifting on its own to attack them.

Fleur listened to her sisters, she nodded her head in response and goes to fetch what they need. Bill, standing by the door at the time, can not help but gaze at her in admiration and love. "Fleur..."

"I can not talk, Bill..." The Veela woman said softly. "The others have a theory at to what is causing the problem. The water seems altered to their gaze. But, if what they believe it is proves true, then there is a cure. But it is one that even Harry will reject."

"What is it?"

"The werewolves are the cure."

"But that should not be so bad...Could we not ask them for help?"

Shaking her head, as the Veelas call for her to hurry, the blonde woman leaves him to pale at what she says next. "Non! If we do as the muggles do and simply use needles, administering the cure is simple. It is what is needed for the cure that makes it difficult."

"What is needed then?!"

"A heart, Bill...A stillbeating heart of a changed shifter..."

-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-

Folks someone actually did something and volunteered their time to fix this chapter up some. They did not waste my time with promises of getting to it or anything in a couple of days. They DID something about helping me right then and there.

Chapter 71

Greyback 1

Dungeons, Hogwarts

Confusion blossomed for a moment as Bill heard the words Fleur had spoken; it took a moment for the implications of what she had said to sink in.

Shaking, he could not help but approach her to turn her around, to see in her eyes that it was not so. Her bright blue eyes trembling, the young woman just looked away, even as he attempts to get her to admit the mistake.

“You’re kidding right?” Bill whispered. “Please tell me you are.”

“Non...” Fleur whispered softly. “My people have experienced this before when our kind and the shifters went to war, hundreds of years ago. They did something like this to us then and it is what caused many a shift among the eldar that almost exposed us to the muggles.”

Knowing that the veela were extremely careful about how they go out and about in the real world, the fact that Fleur tells him they almost revealed themselves shocked him deeply. “My god...you are not kidding,”

“No Bill,” She replied softly. “If the others are right, it is a potion designed to...to...”

“What, Fleur...?”

“It was designed to create skin walkers, Bill.” She said softly. “But it backfired badly on the shifters. God...” Tears were running down her cheeks, she places the ingredients on the table only to be pulled into the older Weasley male’s embrace. “The screams, the pain...”

To those who would not understand, there is a reason why almost all Veela are female and look so much alike in some shape or form.

They are a race where the memories of the past play as big a part in their lives as the experiences being made in the present. It is what makes them wise, while at the same time beautiful, much like their cousins, the elves. For within them, the knowledge of their past lies, both dormant and very much alive...

So to say Fleur did not know would be true and, yet, a lie at the same time.

She remembers the feelings, the horror and the pain of that dreadful time. Where once they as a species felt much like the Darkness does at this moment. That they were superior to all else.

Invincible...

"It won't come to that if we can help it, Fleur. It won't."

Saying nothing, Fleur finds herself curling into Bill's embrace. She has missed his strong arms around her so much over the years. Taking it in, drinking it like it was air into her very body, she separated reluctantly from his firm support and turned back to the potion she was making.

Bill reaches out and supports her still. She gives him a soft smile which he returns with warmth. During their search for clues about a possible Horcrux, as Voldemort had spent a surprising amount of time in Albania, they both had become very close, and shared a tight bond as they once had.

Working steadily side by side, neither one of them notice the pained hope that rises in their hearts over the next couple of hours. As the Veela and the others rapidly worked, the songs being sung upstairs reached down, giving them all a little hope.

No one saw the arrival of the elves or of more Veela, with whose aid the three singers continue to buy time.

But then the hope dies, as Fleur pales when the potion turns a deep blue. Bill wraps her tightly in her arms, as Hermione and the others soothe the Veela who tremble with fear, their aura flaring despite the pendants around their necks. Bill tells of what Fleur has told him.

Shaking, Fleur nodded her head at a singular question that Hermione had asked, the same uttered by Bill moments earlier, as Remus listened in. The answer caused the young woman, not to give in to despair, but to throw herself into her work even harder, searching for a solution other than the only way offered to them. The werewolf, on the other hand, slowed as he began to think.

In the end, it wasn't until others came running down, to state that the elves had arrived and placed stasis charms on the affected victims, that anyone breathes even a small sigh of relief.

Even then, that did not last long for moments later Harry came down the steps, tired and hoarse.

"How is it going? Have you...?"

"We know what's going on. The Veela have encountered something like this before and...there is a...cure."

"Well, what is it?"

"Us, Harry..." Remus replied quietly. "Or should I say, our hearts..." He looked at Alexandre as he spoke. The older man had just arrived behind Harry and the others. He, and the new arrivals, listen as Remus explains.

A singular look passes between the two shifters, and they nod their heads. The other shifters around them grow restless as their instincts rise with anticipation. Harry, not liking what he hears, somehow understands what they have planned.

"Remus...are you sure?"

"Yes. It's time we settled this...I settled this... with him."

Nodding his head, Harry hugs both men tightly. "If you two don't win, I swear I will find a way to bring you back and kill you myself."

"Why wolfing you doubt moi?" Alexandre teased as he ruffled Harry's hair. Despite being as tall as he was, the growl of irritation for the despised act was not missed and yet at the same time, expressed feelings of deep affection.

Sirius himself, having realized in part what they intended to do, began making protests. Remus merely shook his head.

"This is my fight my friend."

Somehow, with those six words, the former convict understood and then nodded his head. "Like Harry said, if you two don't come back, we will both bring you back and kill you ourselves. And I am damn certain that Tonks and Isabelle would be happy to help."

Giving a shared gulp at the mention of the two women, love to one and mother to both, they both nod their heads and leave.

To those who had heard the exchange and did not understand, Harry states a single name that helps them understand as he speaks.

"Greyback. They are going after Fenrir Greyback, and what is left of those who still support him."

Chapter 72

Greyback Interlude: Initial days after the search begins

Godric's Hollow

A couple of days had passed since Alexandre and Remus had left with several of their pack to go after one of the Dark Lord's chief supporters. These were two overriding reasons for their search that were foremost in their mind.

Although he was a werewolf, considered lowly by most, Greyback was a crucial force in gaining the dark creatures' alliance, which Voldemort still held. Most beings that rallied around him did so because of the fact that he insisted on staying "true to what he was" rather than adapt as many of them had tried to—that is, tried and failed to do...

Even though all could feel the increase in the lies in the very air that Voldemort breathes, the treachery that was just waiting to strike, many of the dark could not bend. Many could not let go of their ways enough to understand that there was a chance to change.

A chance to evolve into something accepted.

Reports of that acceptance in the Americas had already begun, in fact. But that was another story entirely.

In any case, they of the dark rallied around those who could not accept the possibility of change. Or did not want to, liking the way things were. And one of the strongest out of these many vile creatures was indeed, Fenrir Greyback.

The second reason for the two men's vengeful search was to save the people being affected by Dean's 'little experiment'.

It was on this day, several days after the two werewolves set out, that those within the hollow watched the dark haired men who seemed to

be working out almost fanatically. Harry and Sirius both had dark expressions on their features as they recalled a recent attack on a small Wizarding village outside of Edinborough that they had just returned from.

There, Dean had been 'playing' with all sorts of horrific spells. There were even some he had picked up from the Half Blood Prince, and Harry recognized these all too well. The people of the village screamed as Dean shot spells that had no counter. Spells that made others whimper with agony as others pled for death.

One spell he used was an enhanced Stinging Hex that would stab deep and cause intense pain as the blood ran across the skin, pain to rival that of the Cruciatus Curse. It was lucky that Ron and some of the Order members he trusted had been nearby. Having run into it before Harry's return, they could not counter it.

The most they could do was murmur a spell to stop the bloodflow from causing any more pain as it ran down nerves of tender skin.

Just thinking about what have they seen in the village made the skin of both men crawl. Both remembered nightmares they had endured over the years, and both paused, though neither noticed the pair of women who came over, one of the women supporting the other.

Isabelle had worry written in her features for not just her son, but for Remus as well. The Matriarch of the La Royaute de la Lune Pride had grown attached to her surrogate family. Remus and Harry both were the sons she wished she could have had after Alexandre. Remus was so much like herself as Alexandre was more like her darling mate and husband. But Harry...

Harry was a boy who was a mixture of both and who needed her desperately, as was Sirius. The older man was fast becoming someone she could adore as she did Harry. Seeing the way both of their eyes lighting up as they saw her, she knew she would forever be the mother neither had had.

Which is why, in her own way, she felt guilty in her joy that these two men did not go with the hunters. Going after Greyback was something only Alexandre and Remus could do. Both went for the same, and yet for different reasons, but both needed this, for Greyback was a demon in both of their pasts that needed to be settled.

And it could not be denied, not even for her fears.

Isabelle then turned to the young woman beside her. One would expect it to be Tonks, but currently the auror was searching and waiting for news of their missing loved ones and the close friends who went with them.

Instead, it was Ginny.

The girl was indeed sweet, and had meant well in what she had done, but it had cost her far too much. Hermione's words were cold, but also truthful. Isabelle's darling wolfling could never return the love he once had for Ginny, that was a relic of a prior life. A prior time that could have happened if not for the pain.

The betrayal...

Those are something that are hard to forget, to forgive, when faced with a potential mate. In the way of the wolves, it could lead to disruption amongst the pride so easily. It had happened once before, for Greyback was a perfect example.

Long ago, he and Alexandre been childhood friends. But then, Greyback began to seek power. Power that Alexandre had. He had challenged Alexandre and lost, and that is when he turned...

And that is when their family's lives, and those of many others, were made forfeit.

It happened slowly, taking time over many years, and yet not once did they suspect. Their instincts did rise, their suspicions grew, but yet, one does not suspect a brother in spirit of betrayal?

Remus and Sirius had both filled in that spot that Fenrir had once held within her son's heart. With those two, she could see her son filled in the spot left by James Potter, Harry's real father. Yes, Sirius had indeed confided in her not to long ago about the connection that James had, and still had, for both himself and Remus. Indeed, many in their world held some kind of connection to the elder Potter, or to the younger Potter male that still lived.

What this Pettigrew did was much like what Fenrir had done.

They couldn't forget that.

And wouldn't.

Setting Ginny down in a lounge chair, she can see the relief in the young woman's features as the pain ebbs away. Harry's presence settled his and Gabrielle's child within her belly. Being the surrogate mother to the child was not easy for the Weasley girl as a part of her still loved Harry.

But yet, with what is happening, as well as Hermione's words, Ginny is beginning to truly see the changes in the boy she had loved. Before, Harry would have never let Remus, or anyone he loved, go and do something without him being there. He would insist on doing it himself, even if he knew it was not his place...

The fact that he was there, and not chasing after Remus, finally forced the young woman to see that he was no longer the one she had once loved. That he had grown out of what, many years ago, had been called his 'saving people thing' and that he could only look at her now as a friend...and not a possible wife...or lover...

Ginny had told Isabelle of her revelation, and the woman had smiled softly with pity in response.

"Now, you have grown..."

Chapter 73

Greyback 2

A week later

Remus was steadfast as he stood beside Alexandre. Willing to step back and give the position of alpha to the one who had become his pride brother, Remus could feel that it was time for them to take out someone whom had harmed them both in the past.

15 wolves strong, not counting Alexandre and Remus, the searchers had scoured the countryside for the current 'den' of Greyback and those still loyal to him. In addition to the death of Greyback, they sought to free any who may still be imprisoned for trying to leave Greyback's pack, and come and answer the call of Alexandre and Remus.

In the middle of a deep forest outside what is known to be the Killacrankee pass, they found their target. Shifting smoothly into wolf form, the two brothers in spirit howled loud and clear the challenge to Greyback.

Their close proximity insured that Greyback could not back out of the battle that was to come. He would have to stand and fight with all that were with him. The trackers expected not only to have to fight him and those few supporters that he had left, who he still fought alongside Voldemort with, but also newly turned wolves, for they admitted reluctantly to themselves that he will have made as many more as he could out of innocent children.

So, out of the 15 wolves with that had followed their leader and his brother, there were 3 women, who were ready to offer comfort and motherhood for the turned children among the pride of Greyback.

Alexandre never turned a child away who was unwillingly changed, and neither would Remus, especially since he too ad been turned, unwillingly, by Greyback as a child.

Waiting patiently, the two men looked at one another in their wolven forms. Due to the blackness of Alexandre's wolf, it was given the name of Blackfell by Harry in a fit of inspiration. The alpha had taken a instant liking to the nickname, as it suited him very well.

Beside him was Remus as Moony, white and shining with radiant power. Ever since he had learned to accept his wolf and bond with it, with Alexandre's aid, Remus's strength and power had showed itself in both his human and lupine form.

Remus still possessed a touch of gray in his hair, a reminder of his painful past. However, although he and Alexandre both were well past their 40th year, the latter looked no older then 28 or 29 and Remus himself could pass for 30 now instead of the 50ish Tonks had commented that he looked before meeting the pack.

Accepting the wolf had made his body change to what it should have been if he had simply accepted the wolf in the beginning. Tonks loved the change, for, well...it increased his stamina in many areas. And to a woman like her, the ability to go as long as he can was a definite bonus.

Tonks loved pleasure. He could not blame her for it either. In a time like this... it was hard to find that without coming across other things as well.

Hearing a rustling, Remus brought himself from his thoughts and braced himself, as did Alexandre and the others. Their noses catching the light breezes from the woods, they can detect that they are outnumbered two to one by the wolves surrounding them. One of the scents is definitely the wolf they seek.

So, as several furry forms attacked the small group, leaping from the bushes almost as one, Moony and Blackfell knew this battle was not for play.

It was for keeps.

Moony snarls and rips with legs and claws as he bites and chokes his enemies with fierce jaws. As two wolves try to smother him to the ground, he lets out a dangerous growl laced with power and bucks them off.

In the training sessions with both Alexandre and his honorable godson, they had found that, once he accepted his lupine counterpart, he could access his wizardly power as Moony.

But the usage was quite different.

It came in bursts of power. Not like what Alexandre can do with his aura, but more like gathering the magic inside him to use like a battering ram.

They figured out that this was why he could last so long with Alexandre in a spar, unlike most of the others. The magic that was a part of Remus was also a part of Moony. And so, with the acceptance of Moony, came the ability to use the power of Remus.

As Alexandre mowed down three of the other wolves that were attempting to overpower him and failing miserably, Remus howled with pure anger as he spotted a silvery gray wolf with black markings.

He knew that wolf well and it responded in kind to his howl of rage.

Leaping upwards, the two met. Claws striking, they sink in to knock Greyback's head away from his vulnerable neck. Already, Moony can sense that Greyback is the weaker of the two of them, but what he lacks in power, he more than makes up in viciousness. It is, after all, his brutality that brought him to the attention of Voldemort.

Bucking Greyback off of him, Moony leapt onto the other wolf, and growled loud and clear as his teeth missed their target, but sunk into a foreleg instead. The magic flowing through his jaws causes Greyback to howl with pain.

But, as he howls, it draws the attention of those under him. As their instincts tell them to watch, the various battles stop as the wolves

from a circle. Something more is now being decided. Some of the more loyal wolves struggle to try and fight and overpower the wolf attacking their leader, but they are restrained by the Pride members with teeth dug deep into necks.

A forced cry for submission erupting from their throats, they collapse to their knees. Some were already forced by the aura of the others to return to human shape.

The fighting had stopped as the decisive battle began.

As the battle between Greyback and Moony began, Alexandre looked with a grim determination at those who had surrendered. Turning back to human, he recognizes them as once being a part of the pride, back before Greyback left.

He had thought that Greyback had killed them, but it seems that he was wrong. They had betrayed him and the pride, instead.

The ones holding the prisoners step to the side. Both know what is about to happen, as Alexandre growls low and dangerously before raising both hands with claws extended and driving them deep into the traitor's chests. Ripping out that which made them live...

Their hearts bleed and pulse in his hands in a steady, but weakening rhythm. They are placed under a stasis spell by another wizard werewolf who had come for just this purpose. A bag is pulled out and the hearts are tossed in to be kept for the Veela's cure.

Alexandre's eyes now focus on the battle, for he will not need to serve as witness to the others. Beside the two killed by his hands, three more were dead, their hearts taken for the medicine, and many other captives shivered with fear. The women, whom all though look a little worse for wear from their fight, move back and sniff the air. Each one nodding their head towards Alexandre, they leap into the bush to fetch the little ones.

Some of the captives are obviously scared; they look to their captors as if they were monsters. But, they take some solace when Alexandre says clearly.

“Unlike Greyback, we do not harm children of any kind.”

Moments later, the women return, each with a child in their arms and one on their back. They were followed by six more, each of whom look at these women with awe, amazed at their strength. All begin circling around the women with need. The women sit down, laying the children in the soft grass, and shift. The children follow suit, and the motherly wolves begin to romp and play with them. They are giving the children happier memories than the ones they know Greyback would have provided them.

While this is hapening, Alexandre and the others have turned back to the fight going on between the two men, who had shifted back to human.

Built bigger than Remus, Greyback had the advantage in physical power. But Remus fought back hard. All the training and fighting spars he had gone through with Alexandre were paying off.

It finally came down to one move. Greyback had Remus in a headlock, and it was obvious he was about to break his neck, but the vile wolf had forgotten one thing. Moony had magic. The wolf enforced his human half's body with intense strength, backed by the magic coursing through the tiring wizard's veins. Remus broke the hold and, in a split second, turned the battle on Greyback.

With a burst of effort, Remus's hand went through the vile man's chest...

Chapter 74

Greyback 3

Greyback's eyes widened as he turns his head, staring at his killer's clawed hand rammed straight through his chest. Turning back, cold amber eyes look into his own, and Greyback realizes that he had made a dreadful mistake in his quest for vengeance so long ago.

This man's father may have wronged him, but when he had come to exact his vengeance, something in this man's spirit, even as a child, had spoken to the wolf inside him. It said, "This child's spirit is something not to be trifled with."

But he had pushed it aside, had ignored his wolf's warnings. Especially when he heard Marcus Lupin boasting how he had bested Greyback in a battle. His rage had consumed him.

Now, as he felt the rapid yank of the man's arm from within his body, he saw his still beating heart in the clawed fingers of Lupin's hand. The last thing the dying shifter saw was the image of the man, whose eyes glowed with lupine power, taking a bite of what once gave him life.

And with that snuff it.

-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-8-

To the others of Greyback's pack, those who were deemed too weak but still forced to fight, watched and felt their former leader's life vanished along with their connection to him. In its place, a new one was born as instincts reared reared up and connected them to this man in front of them.

One of them approached, a male. His wolf instincts needed to come close, to confirm the new bond. Remus stood still, the blood dripping from his mouth, he understood that this was what Alexandre had meant.

There needed to be an acceptance from the wolves of the defeated pack. Greyback was not kind and despite the fact that the weaker ones would not have fought in many battles, many scars were upon their bodies, as if they had been beaten far too many times.

Looking to Alexandre out of the corner of his eye, his friend and fellow wolf nodded his head softly. He needed to remain where he was, needed to allow them to touch, to confirm that this was real...

"Taste?" The shifter could not help but ask, tentatively. A few others starting to come a little closer, to touch and feel Remus. Their instincts needed to take in his scent and to feel the protection of Moony's spirit.

A low growl emerging from his lips, the leading shifter cringed in front of Remus and the others took a step back in fear of a blow. The wolf, Moony, knew that this was not good. These wolves were weak, yet the part that was Remus re-iterated over and over that it was not their fault.

They were made to be weak. Like he had been told by so many, they had become convinced that being a shifter was evil and that Fenrir was the only one who would accept them.

This brought a thought to Moony, whom, because of his contact with this man's soul, had developed an intelligence of his own. An idea comes to mind, the wolf within woofing it to his human half.

'Share?'

A smile crosses Remus's lips as he agrees, and Moony backs down to allow the weaker ones to come closer. His hand squeezes the half-eaten heart, shredding it into pieces, turning it to a pulp like juice that pools in his hand.

His hand going out to each one that approaches, and their tongues lick at the blood stained hands. Their instincts begin to accept Fenrir's death and to realize that this man is their new leader.

One who is stronger and different from the nightmare that made them what they were.

As they licked and touched his fingers, they tasted kindness and strength. They scented family and pack around him, the kind that they craved, for their former leader always reeked of death and blood.

The wolves within their body, trembling and scared before, now were drinking in the warmth of this silver one whose spirit nudged them awake, whose fur reeked of power and protection from those that would harm them for any reason. This man was theirs and no other pack's....

"Safe?" A young teenager around 13-14 asked as he attempted to come closer. His leg was oddly twisted, and Remus knew by his scent that this young man was still a pup in shifter years. The fact that he was dragged into the fight made him look around and he found that a fair number of those that were not killed were mere teenagers.

The few adults that were in the group seemed to be reluctant and almost unwilling to fight...almost as if they didn't have the heart to do so.

Still his eyes drifted once more to the teenager, beckoning him to lie down as best he can. Remus looked to Alexandre who smiled and handed him his wand.

Whispering some healing spells, Remus smiled as the young teenager relaxed. The boy had been terrified, as Fenrir was known to kill the weaker or injured ones in his pack. The boy watched in awe as he felt the bones knit...

"Change..." Came a rough and gravelly voice, which he knows is the wolf of the new leader speaking out. "Change heals. Change will make stronger"

Alexandre watches and listens, Blackfell watching with him. Alexandre listens as the black wolf began talking for the first time in many years. Rarely before has he needed to, bonded with Alexandre as he had been at the point when his wolf spirit awoke. Something

about it clicked very much like a long forgotten memory. Still it mattered not...

'Moony pride leader now. He has much work to make these ones strong. We will help.'

"Indeed, much must be righted and he can not do it alone, old friend."

That said, Alexandre steps forward to approach two younger wolves and an older one. All three are battered and worse for wear. Blackfell makes a sound to his wolf brother, and Moony lets out a low rumble in reply, stating that they can trust him and those who come to help.

Although wanting to flee to their new leader, his rumbling sound calms their spirits quickly and they begin to understand...

They can begin to trust.

Chapter 75

Aftermath and Thoughts of a Wolf Mother

Three days later

Harry and Sirius waited patiently as Tonks pounced on Remus the moment he came into view. Laughter in their eyes as Remus is tackled to the ground with the exuberance of a woman in love; they take notice of the shyness of those coming out from around them.

Alexandre having come ahead, had warned them that these people, had been treated poorly by Greyback and honestly they were not surprised when they heard it. The children whom were more adaptable to change had already come with Amelia, Jacqueline, and Maria who were considered the universal pride mothers along with Isabel.

As each one stepped forth, they themselves found them being tackled and greeted by smiling and laughing kids. Each one babbling about toys and various other things a mile a minute, they look to Remus with surprise.

He just shrugs and points to Harry and Sirius. Both men looking a bit sheepish, they just shrug. "He's family."

That said the wolves found themselves being gently pulled by others to get cleaned up. Alexandre and his pride had agreed long ago and after talking with Remus. That with their not being enough room for two alphas as despite their friendship...

Well despite their friendship sooner or later Moony and Blackfell would clash.

It was only natural instinct.

But they would be close friends and would be visiting one another quite often. Especially if Isabel had anything to say about it as she would not be losing contact with her cubling. Even now that he had

proven himself, the fact that the youth often acted as a cub in need of her love.

Well she would not deny him. As Ginny especially comes closer to giving birth, Harry had been coming to her more frustrated. He wants so badly to yell and scream at the young woman for not being Gabrielle. For not being the woman whom had earned his heart as the young woman had done. For being alive when Gabrielle was dead....

He needed to vent about Voldemort and those that depend on him to save them. Even though there were parts of him that did not want to. There were so many things, and so much pressure to bring peace. Even with the changes and the fact that now his fellow wizards were doing what they could to fight back.

He worried whether it was enough?

He worried whether or not he was sending to many innocents to their death. His pacing his needed to voice his thoughts. Harry was troubled and it was slowly breaking him. It was only with her and his family that was keeping him sane.

She and the shifters were praying that his son came soon now. The little baby was due to come within the next two weeks according to Madame Pomphrey and everyone was anxious. Perhaps that little bit of life would be the catalyst to bring the young man back to them.

Harry was slowly drifting away in mind and control. The loss of Gabrielle and the issue with Ginny.... The people wanted him to lead more and more despite the fact that he does not want to. Many still depended on him to save them and even though he did not care to. As others have said, in the long run his conscience would not have allowed it.

The stress of everything was finally beginning to get to him. But this time, this time he at least had a way of letting it out, thanks to those who care to love him.

You see even now as she watches; Sirius, Remus, and Alexandre were acting like a bunch of idiots as they fought over what toys to buy and even decorating what Harry had set up as the nursery. Each one stating that they will be the best Uncle that little James knew, and teach him how to do so many things a piece that Harry just shook his head and laughed at them.

Ron beside him as he had been visiting at the time, she could see that the two were becoming friends that they were once. Just stronger, then they had been years ago. Much like how Sirius and Remus explained it to her as she watched them argue over strategy once.

Both men having been in the position that these two were in years ago, they had not been as close as they were back then for a long time. They had a broken fragile trust between then that wanted to be repaired. But neither knew how until they started over.

By doing that, it opened a clean slate of sorts. One where the past was there, and would forever be so. But where it made them remember that this time they had to walk past that memory a fresh start...a change...

It was a change that was needed and has been helping Harry reconnect with his past in a way that did not hurt. Just listening to the three men bicker back and forth was enough to bring a smile to Harry's face. Ron joining in the arguing now as he was going to be the godfather to the baby...

Yes, during the time they had gotten to talking again both men had realized they had changed. In those years since his innocence was discovered, Ron had taken a look at the youth that he used to be.

And realized he did not like what he saw. He was a jealous ignorant young man who in believing so foolishly in what others told him. Thought all was right, yet it wasn't. It was stupid, it was wrong. He should have had faith.

Even Harry had done some soul searching as he grew and saw that he had weaknesses. The main one being he had trusted too easily in

those who supposedly cared for him. His ability to trust was a plus but it was also his downfall.

You trust too easily, you get taken for granted.

Even now as Isabel remembers what he had told her, she can not help but agree with those words.

After all, it is how mistakes are made.

Chapter 76

Horcrux 1

Three days later

Ginny could not help but smile softly as the others continued to celebrate the safe return of Remus and Alexandre. Wishing she could join them, the young woman was not sure of what to do. Those last thoughts of Hermione and Isabel both since her and Harry's fight had been running through her mind.

Both women along with Fleur kept visiting her since that fight but the topic of Harry was taboo around them. She may have accepted that he was different now, that he wasn't her Harry but it was hard. She was used to being able to move around, to be free, to be with her friends, to be with him....

But she remembers that was then...it's not now.

Being put on bed rest did not help Ginny much either. Her belly round and big, she could not help but rub it and feel the pressure put upon it by the live being inside of her. A being that she had come to love with all her heart and it shows as answering little kicks to her fingers. Brought back things, that Fleur had stated Veela children have of emotional connection that they need to grow and to take in their history while in the womb.

Fleur....

She was Harry's sister-in-law and she was someone whom believed when no one else did. As Bill had shared with the family and others of the order, they were taking a new look at magical creatures such as veela, werewolves, vampires and all of them. Considering representatives of two were at the moment with them, they were approached and they confirmed.

Seems Remus and Fleur were not the only ones who sensed something was wrong with Harry after he was accused. All they could really say was that it felt wrong. Other members in the Order according to Hermione, reluctantly at the explanation raised their hands and said the same thing.

Although at the time they had firmly believed he was guilty of murder, something about it didn't sit right. Even Albus said he did not believe that Harry had done such a thing. It had led to a current theory that Hermione was actually doing some serious thinking on.

Perhaps, those who could sense Harry was innocent back then.... That perhaps they were descendants as well of magical creatures in some shape or form? They know for a fact that the senses of a werewolf were stronger in human form as well as wolf.

Fleur's explanation for the Veela's and their senses explained quite a bit as well. It makes sense that those who know illusions would sense when one is being drawn even if there is no magic.

Other people long before the incident with Harry and even Sirius had spoken out that some of their loved ones were innocent. Very rarely they were right, but albeit to late for a couple three men had been proven to be just that.

Innocent...

When looking up there ancestry just recently, Hermione had come to discover that all three had some kind of magical creature blood. One was of elfin descent, as two were the children of werewolves, just without the curse in their blood.

It would explain quite a bit to be honest on why the politics were as they are in their society. Why people like Dolores Umbridge gain power in the ministry so quickly on this godforsaken pureblood motif. Many of the incidents that could have been avoided since she came to power were not, simply because of that damn toad like woman's stupid laws.

There had been unnecessary battles and deaths that only drove what could have been potential allies away from them....

Knowing what they know now, could just the mere fact of allowing them to testify stop all this?

So many what ifs....

Startled out of her thoughts, she sat up a little better on the bed in her room as footsteps were being heard outside of her door. Confusion evident on her features, it is Madame Pomphrey as well as her mother and Hermione with her. Both of them casting what could only be protective spells on her, she looks puzzled with confusion. She sees as two werewolves come in as well.

“What’s going on?”

“Harry is going to attempt to destroy something that could be potentially explosive. Since you could not be moved, we are going to cast as many wards and spells to keep you and the baby safe...”

-8-

All right, this is short and I know that folks. But the next one is going to be considerably longer and well flashbacky a bit. I didn’t want you all waiting forever till I finished it though so at least you all get this much as well a little more insight into Ginny.

Chapter 77

Horcrux 1-2

Nimue

Harry was finishing the last touches outside his home on wards and anything he can think of to protect his home and those few within from destruction. Even now save for Ginny and a few shifters. Every single non-magic user had been evacuated to Hogwarts with Albus's permission.

Taking into account that Albus was dying from just destroying one all by himself, the side of light was taking no chances with anyone else doing the same thing. Wards and all sorts of protective charms were being cast upon the house and those that remained as a solitary cup was placed in the center.

A cup that had almost cost Harry his life in trying to obtain....

Sighing as he pinched his nose between his fingers, he found Sirius approaching him cautiously and with a glass of what seems to be plain water in his hands.

"You all right cubling?"

Giving a small look of irritation at the name, Harry still can not help but smile as he gazes at his godfather. For the longest time he was mad, that just to get this man back had cost him his wife. But without Sirius, well...

Without him, he doesn't know what he would have done for many of the battles. Sirius's experience as a former auror was a boon in fighting a war he never wanted any part of in the first place. Not only that, it was Sirius who helped remind him to laugh....

Laugh and a part of the pain went away. Enabling one to think and to perhaps even hope again...

He still chuckled in memory at the other day of his godfather as well as Remus, Alexandre and Ron fighting over who would hold the prestigious honor to his own child.

His own....

These last few days despite trying to avoid her, Harry had wanted to see Ginny for the sheer fact he had to make some kind of truce with the woman. He needed the red head as already he knew his son viewed her as his mother.

Despite not wishing it was so, he knew Hermione's words from weeks before would come back and bite him. Isabelle was someone whom he could count on, but she too would be going with her son when he returned to France after all this was over.

Through the Floo and letters they would remain connected which he was thankful for. But the shifter pride mother would not be here to help him raise the baby and not only that; there was only so much he could do as a father before to put it simply.

A mother was needed...

Shaking his head free of thoughts best kept for later, he looked at Sirius as he took the drink and smiled ruefully at his godfather who placed his hand on his shoulder with reassurance,

"I'm all right...just thinking."

Somehow the tone alone made Sirius remain silent on it. Just taking him into his arms and offering a hug, Harry felt better at the warmth his godfather offered him. "You will figure it out Harry. You have time."

A wry smile appearing on his lips, he recalls those exact same words as he looks at the cup with irritation.

Flashback....

"You have time Harry; we don't need to get them now."

Giving a small sigh as he looks at Tonks, the young man shakes his head. "As much as I wish that was the case. I'm afraid I am getting tired. I want it done."

Remus and the others in the room, puzzled for a moment. It takes a moment for them to understand. As long as Harry or anyone else could remember, Harry has constantly had to fight for some measure of peace. Some measure of a life to call his own.

"Harry..." Remus whispered softly as his heart reaches out to his cubling. Despite not being related, Harry is a part of the pride belonging to both Alexandre and himself. This young man who has never had a family needs them all and for him to be tired at such a young age?

Was almost as if he was giving up...

Turning to his long time friend and adoptive father in spirit, Harry's eyes were still a vibrant green. But they looked so old.

"I want it done Moony...I just want it done."

"How about you begin with Hufflepuff's cup?" A voice said from behind them merrily. Turning around, they looked to find a fey like woman with brilliant red hair staring at them with a wise and extremely powerful air around her.

"Nimue...." Sirius worded in shock.

Considering she had arrived though the wards, everyone was in shock as they all as a whole had not sensed her coming because of it. But now that she has come, she just smiled and sat there as they and their senses had been thrown into chaos.

The woman just giggled though as things started to calm down and people just looked at her in shock....eventually.

"How...how did you get by the wards?" Remus asked as Sirius just shook his head. The former auror several times had attempted to

explain, about the place where he was trapped. And how this woman was the only one whom had been able to come and go at will to visit him. The others now willing to listen, Harry can't help but growl in anger.

The question of how she got in was a moot point at the moment, but he was more upset over something else. "If you could get in and out why?! Why couldn't you have let him out to?! Why! DAMNIT! TELL ME WHY! WHY DID MY WIFE HAVE TO DIE SO I CAN HAVE MY GODFATHER BACK?!"

The woman's eyes narrowed a bit in rage at his anger, but then soften. Stepping down softly, she placed hands on his cheeks with gentleness. "Even I can not disobey the rules young one. No matter how much I want to I can not."

"Why though...why?" Harry asked as a deep pain filled his eyes. Nimue herself seeing the sadness regrets with all her heart she can not give him answers that he seeks. "I do not know... Even now much is kept from me young one." She replied as she brushed fingers through his dark hair. "But at least I am allowed this much."

Pressing her lips to his forehead, she and Harry both began to glow. A song of the phoenix erupting into the air, the two remain still for what seems like ages to those who worry. But as it ends, the woman smiles as she parts.

"You now have the way Harry. It is up to you to use it."

Flashback ends....

And use it he would. What she had shared with him was a merging of the minds somewhat. Basically he learned of an ancient spell that would insure that the part of Voldemort within whatever said object would not be able to rejoin with the main.

The problem was this spell was very ancient and they did not know how it would react. Considering that this particular item or this particular curse on said item was killing Albus. They wanted all bases covered.

Especially after all the trouble they went to get it.

Flashback...

It has been about an hour since the woman left, as Harry seemed to be in a bit of a daze. The others even tried waving their hands in front of his eyes hoping he would brush them away. But he didn't react and when he did...

Well let's just say it was well after the fact.

Now though Harry seemed to be coming out of it. And despite the aged look in his eyes, it now sparked with something akin to anticipation. The young man smiled brightly as he pointed a finger at Bill Weasley. The slightly older man puzzled, the red head looked at Fleur who smiled and nodded her head.

Having recently returned from securing more allies among the various veela tribes, the two had grown closer once again. Unlike her sister, Fleur's Veela genes had become more dominant over the years since she had last been in the British Wizarding world. And it was discovered that despite she was mostly human, those Veela genes had finally kicked in one thing which explained their closeness....

It seemed Bill was well and truly Fleur's other half by her instincts.

Anyhow, as the red head came forward, Harry gave a smile. "Do you still by any chance work for Gringotts still?"

"Gringotts? Why would we need to go there?"

"Not we....my godfather and myself." Harry stated. "I don't quite understand all that she shared with me yet. But in it one thing stood out clearly. Bellatrix LeStrange has a horcrux in her vault. And it is the Hufflepuff cup."

Understanding now, why he was asked to come forward. Bill sets about explaining some of the rules and regulations. That is in goblin standards....

First rule was that to a goblin, they will question. Having a muggle TV as he does, Bill and some of the other wizards who come and go have commented on how a goblin was like a Ferengi in that muggle sci fi show Star Trek. Similar likes and dislikes when it comes to money.

Second rule was to follow their directions to a tee. Because of the fact that Sirius was a relative of Bellatrix, he could in a sense be able to enter her vault that she and her husband have. But the issue was this; they would not be allowed to take anything from it without said people's permission.

That last rule would be the problem. But Harry had let out a smile in amusement.

"Being a kid for as long as I was did give me one advantage. I got to play with clay."

Flashback ends....

Confusion on the features of most of the wizard born, back then it took Alexandre laughing as well as many of the other shifters as they knew of what Harry talked about after he said it.

If Voldemort had known that something as simple as a muggle toy would enable the light to obtain his precious Horcux. Well it would be irony at its best.

Chapter 78

Hufflepuff 1

“So Harry what’s the plan to break into Gringotts.” Sirius piped up as he and the others, shifters and wizards alike were curious on how this was going to happen.

Gringotts, goblin run and all was considered to be nigh on impenetrable against break ins. Even though Voldemort did it himself 10 plus years ago to get the Philosopher’s Stone, since that one incident the goblins had become nigh on fanatical on keeping track of the riches within.

“Simple...we go through the front door.” Harry replied as he stares at his godfather. “I think some of you have forgotten Bellatrix’s name is really Bellatrix BLACK LeStrange.”

“That’s right! She’s your cousin, isn’t she Sirius?” Alexandre asked questioningly. Having heard much in the way of what happened the previous years from Harry and Remus, the shifter could not help but ask to be sure.

Sometimes details in stories do get a bit misinterpreted after all.

“One I would rather like to forget.” The ex-con mutters as he answers his new found friend with a wry look. The others were chuckling at the dark gaze of irritation displayed by the man. Those who truly knew and understood the man, had known that there was no love lost between himself and Bellatrix, who was considering crazy from birth by many.

“Anyway Sirius as her cousin and head of the Black family, with a bit of glamour he should be able to come with me and get in to her vault. Based on the fact she is family, he should be able to get in to view what’s there.” Harry stated. “The trick will be switching the cup out for a fake one that looks and feels exactly like it.”

“Knowing the goblins that won’t be easy...” Bill commented quietly. Fleur nodding her head in agreement at his words. “Especially with

the wards and the way they work. The fact of the matter is this. They will know when even the slightest magic is used inside Gringotts. To fool them, will be tough..."

"We may not need to fool them." Harry said thoughtfully. "It is someone else we need to fool."

"Voldemort."

"Indeed." Harry replied. "Knowing how paranoid he can get about things from my own memories and that which the others have shared with me. In her vault or not, there is more than likely going to be enough traps on it, that they could alert him to what we are planning to do."

"So the problem you are telling us is simply this. Once we get in, we not only have to look for any traps set by Voldemort, we also have to not set the goblin wards off in the process." Tonks stated as she finally spoke up. Having come in with Remus, as an Auror she did have some say and some power in what was not corrupted of the ministry left. "And on top of that we will have to get out, while achieving that?"

"Pretty much." Harry said pleasantly as his eyes seemed to be filled with anticipation. "I can make a duplicate of the cup rather easily. It's just going to be the feel of it that's going to be rather difficult, considering I actually have to be in the vault to do it."

"Now how pray tell are you going to make a duplicate of a goblin made item?" Sirius asked. "I'm up for the rest of it, but that I can't figure out?"

"Easy...we make one out of clay." The younger man replied. "Being de-aged as I was, it did allow me to explore my childhood again and one thing I had always wanted to play with was play doh. You will be amazed at what that stuff can do." He chuckled. "The rest with a little magic and a hell of a lot of luck will have to be done there unfortunately."

"Harry...you're absolutely crazy you know that?"

The dark haired young man looked at her with aged and yet vibrant green eyes. "A bit...." He said quietly. "But quite frankly, if Voldemort can do it, so can we Tonks. We need to do it if we have a chance at ending the war and soon. Will you help me?"

The woman looking up at her nephew if in spirit, she nods her head with a warm smile. "I guess I better, as a Black as well if only half I should be able to get in as well. Might need me to protect you both and besides. Who else is going to keep an eye on the two of you in there?"

"What? You don't trust your dear cousin Tonks? I'm hurt!" Sirius replied with a bright smile on his features.

The woman simply raised an eyebrow as she looked at her relative. "Remus told me about that stunt with Lockhart dear cousin. So the answer is do I trust you not to do something extra while there. Nope...not one bit."

"Mr. Padfoot would like to declare Mr. Moony is a traitor for spilling Marauder secrets on this prime pranking opportunity."

"Mr. Moony would like to tell Mr. Padfoot, that Miss Tonks is deadlier than Mr. Padfoot when she retaliates and Mr. Moony would like all his bits intact for future use thank you very much."

"And Miss Tonks would like to say that she agrees. She likes Mr. Moony's bits where they are as well. Miss Tonks would be extremely upset if certain bits disappeared as she has grown quite attached to the hours of use she can get out of them."

The bawdiness of the young woman's words put aside, the plan is temporarily forgotten as they all look at Moony who flushes a bright pink.

"Moony, you animal." Sirius chirped with a smile. "And with my wee cousin no less...so when's the weddings bells? Because friend or not, you don't do right by her and I will hex you into oblivion old pal."

Laughter reigning as Remus sputters out indignation, it was the first time in a while that something so carefree had sounded so good for many of them. All of them needed that sound to bolster their spirits.

A few hours later, as they finalized the plans, and readied what they needed they looked at one another they nodded their head in agreement. This time tomorrow...they were ready to go.

-8-

Harry found himself cloaked and hooded once more as he stood outside Gringotts. Sirius beside him in glamour, he turned and made sure Tonks was ready to create a huge distraction that even the goblins would come out for.

Having one in mind, he nodded his head and held up a single finger.

Responding to the time he has set, he looks to his godfather, who smiles brightly with anticipation. "You know I always wanted to do this."

"Break into Gringotts?"

"Nope...well yeah but I look at it differently. I always wanted to prank them. Your dad and Moony would never go for it though. But yet here we are about ready to do one..."

A small smile crossing his lips, Harry looks at Sirius with a tilt to his head. "Think Dad would be proud?"

"Yeah I think he would Cub. He would think we were out of our minds. Which to be doing this we kind of have to be. But yeah he would be proud." The former con said with a warm smile.

Harry returning it, the two step forward. Within Harry's hand is a timed shrunken box, which holds what they intend to swap. Trying to avoid using any magic that they can, they timed the box for two hours after they enter the vault.

Considering the story they had come up with the box also held scrolls, paper and various other items, for which to show should a goblin chose to look.

Because Sirius, other then being the Black family head, knew his family had wealth in abundance. Therefore there was no telling what was in the vault, or even how long it would take them to go through to find this one cup that was a duplicate of the one they made.

So the idea of cataloging what would more then likely return to him, was a safe and yet convincing one to tell. Especially as it would require them to look at every item there...including any and all cups....

The one that they seek is one that shines a bright gold color. It was simple and yet elegant with a regal elaborate setting of jewels upon one side, like the original it was made to resemble. Hermione being the research miracle that she was, had provided a picture she had tracked down surprisingly enough in Hogwarts a history,

Within it was a picture of Helga Hufflepuff, holding said cup within her hands as she smiled. A healer of renowned skill, it was said that she often used this cup to hold the potions she used to aide her patients.

Believing he made a copy as far as he could go, the young man had shown his effort before they had left that morning and the others just shook their heads in amazement.

Earlier...

"You weren't kidding about being able to make it were you Harry."

"Well you said it was goblin made right? Goblins if I remember my history right, when it comes to certain things are known to prefer to make them by hand rather then magic. It has to look as if I had done just that."

Sending a gentle heating charm to dry the clay out and make it harden, he smiled as Tonks bent down close to work a shine spell as he did it. Feeling that as a former Hufflepuff, she herself should have

a hand in helping retrieve said object, the woman had been patient and pointed out things that Harry may have missed in the process.

“I think this honestly might work...” She whispered in amazement as the cup began to take shape

Present...

Stepping into the halls of the Wizarding bank, the two look at one another and approach the Goblin in charge for the day. One that is quite familiar, to Harry as Griphook, the two approaches the figure with caution.

Of all the goblins, Bill had warned them that Griphook was by far the craftiest one of all and to pay attention to exactly what the being says.

Apparently a master of double talk, Griphook could swindle your first born before you even realize you had been had.

But then again, Harry had lived a second life and Sirius had nothing to lose. The two looked at one another and looked up at the goblin with sad eyes.

“How may I help you Mr. Black?”

“Aawww you remember me Griphook. I’m touched.” Sirius replied jovially, his tone relaxed, it was a vast difference to the guarded stance he had alongside Harry. The fact that no one has been called means that as Bill said they were dealing in Goblin territory and not Wizard territory.

And by law he has done nothing to the Goblins. Well at least nothing yet... “As head of the Black family, I formally request looking into my dear cousin Bellatrix’s vault. Considering her condition, I may be forced into taking back that which belongs to my family.”

“I see....there is a fee.”

“Of course, I am willing to discuss it with you. Much as you know of my family, I honestly do not want 90% of what is probably in there.

But you see there is still that occasional little item that might be something I would desire returned to the Black Family Vaults in remembrance of the few good memories I have.”

“The fee will be 100 galleons for entering the vault Mr. Black and another 200 for each goblin to assist you in the cataloging.”

“No need for the latter part. I brought someone here with me.”

Sitting up in his seat, the Goblins eyes narrow as he takes in the familiar form of one he knows from long ago. “Mr. Potter. It seems you are running quite the risk appearing in public are you not? We goblins have been offered much to let certain individuals know when you emerge.”

“And will you tell them we are here?”

“No.”

“Will anyone else?” Harry asked smoothly. The Goblin just looking at him, speaks with a calm and curious tone. “It seems you have studied up on us. The answer is perhaps they may, I do not know. I do know the ones who wished for me to let them know did not offer near enough for me to bother doing so.”

“I see, if any attack should come about. Would we be allowed to defend ourselves? And for a fee of course...say 300 galleons?”

“But of course. It would be bad that account holders such as yourselves were hurt. We do like to keep things pristine.” Griphook replied with a greedy smile. “Would that be all?”

“It is I am impressed Griphook. I would figure by now, someone would have come for us....”

“Indeed. It is the Goblin way. But then many here know better, then to cross me. We do what we can to how you wizards say get better in life? No matter whom we step on to get it? I am quite vengeful and very creative.”

Their agreement taken care of, Griphook summons a younger goblin by the name of Goldcoast to escort them to the vault.

Following the smaller creature heading towards the carts, the two look at one another and nod their heads. Reaching to a pendant that he wears, he taps it twice to let Tonks outside know that they were going in...

The plan was on the move.

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Action is so not my strong point, and I am right now still working on that part ladies and gentlemen as I have been for the last month or so. But I was pretty sure you all were getting tired of waiting so I will kick this part to you at least.

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